

तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय

SANTINIKETAN
VISWA BHARATI
LIBRARY

S.L.

354.02

M 19

THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

BY
DEWITT MACKENZIE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
LIEUT.-COLONEL SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND
K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E.

British Commissioner to Tibet, 1903-4, Author of "The
Heart of a Continent," etc. etc.

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO
MCMXVII

INTRODUCTION

PEOPLE often hesitate about going to India, not so much because of the distance, but because of the amount there is to see and do when they get there. They think it hardly worth while to make a short visit, while they have not the time to spare for a long stay. But there is no country to which a short visit is better worth making. I have frequently told my doubting friends that if they can spend only a week in the country it is better to give India even that little time rather than go through life without ever seeing India at all.

You will not understand India if you have spent only a week there. You will not completely understand it if you have lived there a life-time. There are very few Indians themselves who really understand India. But if you have once *seen* it, if, from looking at it out of the window of your railway carriage, you have realised its vast extent, its teeming life, the extraordinary variety of its people, its natural

features, its vegetation and its climate ; if with your own eyes you have seen the dignified and gorgeously-apparelled Raja, the equally dignified cultivator with scarcely any apparel at all, the intellectual Bengalis, the bearded virile Sikhs, the noble Rajputs, the fierce tribesmen of the Afghan frontier and the primitive aborigines of Central India ; if you have ever seen the flat, unbroken Gangetic plain and the towering Himalaya ; the deserts of the Punjab and the tropical vegetation of Bombay, Bengal, and Southern India ; and if you have personally experienced the scorching heat of the plains and the freezing cold of the mountains ; then India ever afterwards will have real meaning for you, you will understand something of its place in the world, you will appreciate the complexity of its social and political problems, and you will be interested in watching its progress. India will be to you a vivid reality. I always therefore advise people to go to India, even if only for a week.

Mr. Mackenzie had fortunately more than a week to spare. He had a few months. He had what was better than time, that is, opportunities for seeing most of the leading men in India, both British and Indian. And from a perusal of his book I should say that he made ample use of those opportunities. Moreover, he visited India at a particularly interesting moment. All

countries are changing now. Even before the war India had been rapidly changing—so rapidly indeed that men who had left the country for four or five years were told they knew nothing about it, though they might have spent a quarter of a century there. The population had been increasing—rising by 28,000,000 in the last decennial period ; the revenue had risen in a quarter of a century from £55,000,000 to £83,000,000 sterling, the railways from 15,245 to 33,599 miles ; the number of passengers carried from 111,000,000 to 437,000,000, the freight tonnage from 22,250,000 to 87,000,000 ; the area actually under irrigation by canals from 11,000,000 to 17,000,000 acres, the number of cotton mills (which are chiefly in Indian hands) from 125 to 258, of jute mills from 26 to 59, and the production of coal from a little over 2,000,000 to 12,750,000 tons. In the same period the exports had risen from 60,000,000 sterling to £166,000,000 and imports from £43,500,000 to £127,000,000. There had been an increase of wealth, and this wealth had been generally diffused in consequence of an increase in the value of agricultural produce and in wages—an increase greater than the increase in the cost of living. And besides this material progress, there had been no less striking intellectual progress. The number of pupils had risen from 3,250,000 to over 7,000,000 and of university

students from 13,000 to over 40,000, and the expenditure on education from £1,750,000 to £5,250,000 sterling.

This increase of material prosperity and the wider diffusion of education had profoundly affected India. The very prosperity had produced discontent and unrest, some harmful but mostly healthy. New life was stirring in India. Indians were becoming more fitted for and had gradually been given a larger share in the Government of their country. The number of elected and non-official members of the municipalities was constantly increasing as well as the importance of the work these bodies had undertaken, such as initiating and executing schemes of water supply and drainage, while districts and local boards in rural areas took care of roads, primary education, water-supply, sanitation, medical help and markets, and in some parts even developed light railways. But it was in the higher councils—in the Imperial Legislative Council presided over by the Viceroy and in the Provincial Legislative Councils presided over by the Governors and Lieutenant-Governors—that Indian participation in the Government of their country had made most notable progress. The Councils had been enlarged, the elective principle had been recognised and freely applied, and the right of introducing resolutions developed so as to enable members to bring the administration under

effective criticism. Indian members had also been appointed to the Council of the Secretary of State for India in London and to the Executive Councils of the Viceroy and Governors in India.

All these changes had been made during the quarter of a century before the war, and the rate of change was being steadily accelerated. There was not only change, but the rate of change was quickening. It was into this stirring India that the war came, and the rate of change has necessarily been still further quickened. Especially valuable, therefore, must be information of what India is to-day—now during the war. The present was a propitious moment for Mr. MacKenzie's visit.

It is well too for India that America should be interested in her. For Indians have great regard and respect for Americans, and certainly those Americans I have met both in India and America have a particular sympathy with India. And India must have a wonderful future before her. I have shown how it was opening out before the war. But the war itself is a stimulus such as she has never had before. It has forced her out into the world. Her soldiers have fought in France, in Turkey, in Arabia, in China, in East and West Africa. She has made this war her war. Her princes and peasants alike have taken their share. And her representatives have been summoned to take part in the deliberations

INTRODUCTION

of the Imperial War Conference at the centre of the Empire. Furthermore this Conference recommended that steps should be taken to enable India to be represented at future sittings with the same right of speech and vote as is accorded to the representatives of the Governments of the Mother Country and the Overseas Dominions. India will also be represented at the annual session of the Imperial Cabinet by a nominee of the Government of India as well as by the Secretary of State for India, and this nominee, except under peculiar circumstances, would be an Indian. As Mr. Chamberlain remarked in the House of Commons, these decisions mark an immense advance in the position of India in the Empire, for they admit the Government of India to full partnership in the Councils of the Empire with the other Governments represented at them. It is a great stride forward to Indian political development.

And the war has had this result also—that it has forced India diligently and earnestly to search for all that she can possibly bring forth in the way of food supply, raw material, and manufactured articles. Hard necessity has compelled her to find out what she can by any manner of means produce, not only for her own needs, but to supply her armies and British armies in many fields of warfare. Some things—the higher types of machinery, for instance—she must get from

Great Britain. Some things—wheat and jute and cotton, for example—Great Britain must in great part get from her. But war has made her strive to be as little dependent as possible upon outside supplies and to produce in fullest abundance all that her soil and climate enable her to produce with ease. Consequently she has had to take severe stock of her resources and to bend her intellect and her energy to the purpose of developing them to their utmost and increasing production to its maximum.

The impetus given by the war will be continued after its close. Both India itself and the Empire at large will need all the wheat, the cotton, the jute, the oil-seeds, the palm-oil, the tea, the coffee, the sugar and the coal and iron that India can produce. Much she already does towards introducing better plants (more productive types of wheat and cotton, for example), improved agricultural implements, better fertilisers, better methods of cultivation. Efforts in this direction will be redoubled. Railways will be extended, both main lines and feeder lines. Other great irrigation works, like those Mr. Mackenzie has described, will be undertaken. In every direction the material condition of India is sure to improve.

But the future of India will lie not only or chiefly in material progress. Political and material progress should and will but lead up

INTRODUCTION

to spiritual progress. The spiritual progress should be the flower and fruit of the whole process—and the seed, too, for still further progress. There are signs of promise here also. Of the beautiful spiritual fruit of India the poet Rabindra Nath Tagore is an exquisite example, full and sweet and with a rich kernel which gives hopeful promise of perhaps yet more favoured products in the future.

Of this side of India Mr. Mackenzie has also been able to see something. And fortunate it is for us of the English-speaking race that we can enjoy the products of Indian spiritual development through their having been given forth in our own language. Fortunate also for Indians is it that their second language is one which will carry them not only over India (as none of their own languages will), but over all the world, reaching the 100,000,000 Americans as well as the whole British Empire and those of other nations who have been attracted by our literature or by business or social interests to learn our language.

FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND.

P R E F A C E

DURING a recent extensive tour of India in pursuit of my duties as an American newspaperman, I was accorded a large number of interviews by eminent authorities, on important subjects relating to the Indian Empire. At that time it had not occurred to me to make use of these statements in any other way than originally intended, namely, to tell the people of the United States through the press something of present conditions in India. Upon my return to England, however, it was urged upon me that these interviews should be collected into book form, especially in view of the great change wrought in India by the war. Accordingly I have prepared this volume, selecting such interviews as appear best to show the general situation, and adding to them certain facts collected during my visit. Controversial subjects necessarily have been dealt with, but I wish to state emphatically

PREFACE

that the book is intended in no way as a criticism of the Government of India or of the Princes and people of the Indian Empire.

DEWITT MACKENZIE.

LONDON,

May 31, 1917.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER I	
THE AWAKENING	17
CHAPTER II	
A WORD OF EXPLANATION	25
CHAPTER III	
THE GREAT EDUCATIONAL TASK	31
CHAPTER IV	
THE INDUSTRIAL WAVE	51
CHAPTER V	
THE AGRICULTURAL SITUATION	60
	15

CONTENTS

CHAPTER VI

	PAGE
THE MAGIC OF IRRIGATION	73

CHAPTER VII

THE TRUTH ABOUT SEDITION	84
------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VIII

THE LOYALTY OF THE INDIAN PRINCES	102
---------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX

GERMAN PLANS THAT FAILED	117
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER X

“HOME-RULE”	126
-----------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI

THE PRINCES, TOO, HAVE HOPES	137
----------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII

PROGRESS IN THE INDIAN STATES	143
-----------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIII

THE DAWN OF A NEW LITERATURE	152
----------------------------------------	-----

THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

CHAPTER I

THE AWAKENING

INDIA to-day is entering upon a new era—an era which bids fair to be marked by progress greater than has ever before been recorded in the pages of that country's history. She has been touched by the magic wand, and at last has been aroused from the lethargy which for so long has acted as a damper to advancement.

The transformation has been sudden, startling in its abruptness, and the line of demarcation between the old life and the new is clearly defined: it may be set in the early days of August 1914, when the great World War had its beginning. For this universal conflagration has stirred India as she has not been stirred in half a century, and, by awakening her to a knowledge of herself, has moved her to a strong desire for better things.

18 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

Up to the beginning of the war, India, as a whole, had been following the well-beaten track of tradition. She had been advancing, to be sure, under the guidance of the British Government, and in many respects had made strides which for her were remarkable, but, measured by Western standards, her progress had been slow, due largely to her own lack of initiative and an unresponsiveness that was the outgrowth of ignorance. She was, so to speak, an empire bound up in herself, knowing little of the outside world, and having small disposition to change her mode of life.

This did not apply to all India, of course, for there were many of the more advanced Indians who, having become tutored in the ways of the West, had read the signs of the times and were trying to lead their fellow-countrymen on to the broad highway of progress. But these pioneers were few in number as compared with India's vast population of some 315,000,000. The great majority of the people, being either totally illiterate or having but a narrow perspective of world affairs, declined to be led.

At the outbreak of the war the King-Emperor called on India for assistance in the life-struggle against Prussian Militarism, and for the first time the people of Hindustan were brought to a realisation of their relation to the rest of the Empire. They responded loyally to the call,

and with that response came a quickening of the impulses to rise to the level of their new-found dignity. They were comrades in arms with their brothers from across the seas; and should it be said that India was a weak link in the chain which formed the British Empire?

Furthermore, a new world was thrown open to India by the war. She had forced home upon her the importance and the power of the great nations which were engaged upon the battlefield. They had, literally speaking, meant little to her before. She was aware, in a vague sort of way, that these countries existed, but her knowledge of them was meagre. Now, however, she began to realise their strength, and learned that this strength was the outgrowth of Western education and ideals.

Then, too, as time went on she found herself shut off from many necessities which had been imported before the war. She had never given much consideration to her source of supply, being satisfied to know that what she wanted was forthcoming, and accepting it as nanna from above. She looked about to find why she should be affected by the curtailment of shipping, and found that she had virtually no industries. Raw materials she had in great quantities, but no means of turning them into the finished product.

India saw now that she was sadly lacking in

20 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

comparison with other great countries, and her pride was touched, her ambitions were aroused. So she set about to right her faults, and the Government of India, quick to recognise and take advantage of this changed spirit, accelerated its own pace in order to satisfy the new-found ideals. One of the first steps inaugurated by the Government was the appointment of a commission of experts to make an exhaustive study of the ways and means of putting India on her feet industrially.

Another important result of the war has been to urge India on the road to nationalism. India at present cannot be considered as a nation, but rather as an agglomeration of many races, castes, and creeds, who tolerate one another, but who have little in common. So-called Native India is, of course, divided into many more or less independent states which are governed by the Princes and Chiefs. And British India, although controlled by the Government of India, does not differ greatly from Native India, so far as a spirit of co-operation between the peoples of the various sections goes.

The war, however, furnished a common cause for which all could work, irrespective of racial distinctions or beliefs. The people of British India laid aside their differences for the moment to engage in this imperial work, and as to Native India, for the first time in history the world saw

in November of 1916 some forty powerful ruling Princes and Chiefs meeting in Delhi for a conference to consider questions of general importance relating to their states—Princes and Chiefs who scarcely had dreamed before this that they could discuss their affairs with other rulers.

Thus the war has given the cause of nationalism in India a decided fillip. It would be too much to expect an immediate attainment of the goal, or anything near it, but a great stride has been made, and the progress in the future will be faster than in the past.

It is but natural that the aspirations of India should reach out first to those two important questions in the life of any country, the political and the industrial. One of the earliest to note the change in the spirit of India and to grasp its significance was Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, who assumed office early in 1916. It was my privilege to interview His Excellency in October of that year on this subject. Discussing the changing political conditions in India and the fact that certain Indian politicians were advocating that still more of the affairs of government be turned over to them, Lord Chelmsford said :

“ No doubt at the present moment political problems are attracting the greatest attention both in and out of India, but none the less it is a mistake to suppose that these are new problems

22 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

which have recently come up, or even different problems from those on which we have worked in the past.

"The political development of India has always commanded our anxious attention and has always been progressive. British statesmen have always conceived in a generous spirit their responsibilities to India and the Indians. Perhaps the rate of definite political progress has been slow, but constitutional development can hardly be other than slow, and I have little doubt that, whatever the future of the Indian policy may be, the Indian historians of its later growth will ascribe no blame to the power which has, with due deliberation, guided their country through the early and difficult ways of political development.

"But the war, affording India an opportunity of displaying in the most dramatic fashion its practical importance to the Empire, has accelerated the pace. It has stirred Indian aspirations, and the new partnership on the battlefield has quickened the sympathy of the whole Empire with those aspirations."

The Viceroy leaned forward and continued with still greater earnestness :

"It will be my task to endeavour to secure a practical response to these quickened impulses, guarding India, on the one hand, against the cramping influences of undue conservatism, and,

on the other, against unpractical and revolutionary tendencies. I need hardly say how deep and sympathetic an interest I take in this task, since I realise that the problem which now confronts the British Government is one of the most difficult problems that ever confronted any Empire, and it is at the same time a problem by the right and just solution of which the British Empire will be finally judged."

I asked Lord Chelmsford if the signs of the times did not point to the beginning of a new industrial era in India, and whether the extension and development of industries would not have a stabilising influence that would directly affect the political situation.

"Yes, I believe that is true," he replied. "Large as the political issues loom at present, I shall not, for my part, be surprised if the economic development of India shortly brings other questions into even greater prominence. I hope the expansion of Indian industries will reduce the heat of political controversies and carry the more active minds of the country into more vital channels of progress. India now requires a forward industrial policy. We have just appointed a commission, composed of Indian and British experts, to investigate every phase of the industrial possibilities. This commission is about to enter upon its labours, and I look to it to furnish definite proposals which will go a

24 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

long way towards solving many existing difficulties."

In considering the possibilities of advancement in India, this fact must not be forgotten : she still has a long way to climb on the ladder before she approaches the level of the other great nations of the world. Many parts of the country are still in a state of deepest ignorance, and it will be a lengthy process to educate them to the standards of the enlightened sections. But India is on the move, and she will progress faster from now on than she has ever done before.

CHAPTER II

A WORD OF EXPLANATION

FOR the average person of the West, the mention of India undoubtedly raises an altogether vague picture of that country, its people, and its government. India has existed in another world, a land shrouded in darkness and mystery. And so the full import of her awakening may not immediately be apparent.

Now the significance of the arousal lies in this : India, a land tremendously rich in natural resources, contains within her borders one-fifth of the population of the entire earth, a people who, though ignorant, have a mental capacity for almost limitless advancement.

The area of India, 1,802,657 square miles, and its population of more than 315,000,000, are almost as great as those of all Europe, Russia excluded. Or, to put it another way, there are as many people in India as there are in the United States, with the rest of North America, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Austria-Hungary thrown in.

26 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

Of the two main divisions of the Empire, British India and the semi-independent Native States, the former is much the larger, having an area of 1,093,074 square miles and a population of about 244,000,000. The Native States contain a little more than 700,000 square miles, and their population is approximately 71,000,000. Nearly three-quarters of the people of the Empire are dependent upon agriculture for existence.

India's claims to nationalism are few. Not only are the people divided by the multiplicity of governments among the Native States, but also by race, religion, and caste. Incredible though it seems, there are 220 languages in use in India. Hindi, which is the leading tongue, is spoken by only about 25 per cent. of the people, and they are widely scattered through the Empire.

Among the religions, Hinduism predominates, there being 217,500,000 followers of this faith. Next comes Mohammedanism, with 66,000,000 adherents. These are the two principal religions. There are also some 11,000,000 Buddhists, 10,225,000 Animists, 4,000,000 Christians, 3,000,000 Sikhs, 1,250,000 Jains, and 100,000 Parsees.

Caste governs the whole social structure of the Empire. Caste may be defined roughly as a collection of families or groups of families which pursue the same calling in life, and there are as many castes as there are occupations. A wide

gulf of intolerance has in the past separated the various castes. Each has looked with contempt upon all those in the ranks below, and an inflexible law has prevented anyone from leaving the caste in which he was born, intermarriage thus being barred. Many observers claim, however, that of late a growing tendency towards tolerance between some of the castes has been noticeable.

The government of a people divided into so many factions naturally presents many delicate situations, and it is moreover rendered complex, as a whole, because of the great diversity of rule exercised by the Indian Princes and Chiefs in their states. The Crown controls the Indian Empire through the Secretary of State for India, who is a member of the British Cabinet, and through the body known as the Government of India, which has at its head the Governor-General, better known as the Viceroy. The Secretary of State presides in London over a council, of between ten and fourteen members, which has control of Indian expenditure, and in general looks after the business done in England by the Indian Government. For several years two members of the Council have been Indians.

The supreme authority in India, executive and legislative, lies with the Governor-General in Council. The Governor-General has in his council six ordinary members, all of whom are

28 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

appointed by the Crown for a period of five years, as is the Viceroy himself. In addition there is one so-called extraordinary member, the commander-in-chief of the army in India. This council is similar to the cabinets of other countries, and the Viceroy may overrule the decisions of his ministers in cases of emergency. One member of the present council is an Indian, the rest being British.

The Viceroy's Council is supplemented by an Imperial Council for the enactment of legislation. In this body are sixty-eight members, of whom thirty-six are nominated by the Viceroy and thirty-two are elected by Indian and commercial interests.

For purposes of administration, British India is divided into provinces and presidencies. There are three presidencies, Madras, Bombay, and Bengal, each of which is ruled by a governor appointed by the Crown, with legislative and executive councils like those of the Viceroy. The Punjab, Burma, the Province of Bihar and Orissa, and the United Provinces are each governed by a lieutenant-governor who is named by the Viceroy with the approval of the Crown. These provinces also have legislative councils. Chief Commissioners, appointed by the Viceroy in Council, preside over still another class of provinces, and there are some smaller tracts which are under the direct administration of the Viceroy.

Each presidency and province is subdivided into districts which are the units of administration, and are usually under the charge of a Deputy Commissioner.

The staff of administration for the Government consists of Civil Service employees, most of the higher posts being under the so-called Covenanted Civil Service. Appointments to the Covenanted Civil Service are made from applicants who have passed competitive examinations which must be held in England. This branch of the Civil Service is made up largely of Europeans.

There are more than 700 Native States, all under some degree of control by the British Government, through the Government of India, the nature of the supervision varying with different states. A British political resident in the states, who acts in an advisory capacity to the Princes and Chiefs, is the medium through which the supreme government exerts most of its direction. Some of the states pay tribute to the Government of India, although this is not true in all cases. Broadly speaking, the Princes are allowed to manage their internal affairs without interference, but all external relations are dealt with by the supreme government. So far as the internal governments of the states go, there is no uniformity among them, each ruler pursuing his own ideas. The Princes have

30 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

no voice in the Government of India excepting in an advisory way. Many of the states have large areas and populations, and the rulers in a great number of cases are fabulously rich.

Those Indians who are advocating a greater degree of self-government for British India claim to find grievances in the complexion of the Viceroy's two councils and in the regulations governing the Covenanted Civil Service. They want more representatives on the Viceroy's Executive Council, and, more important, demand a majority in the Imperial Legislative Council, declaring that the appointed majority now renders the elected minority helpless except to voice an opinion. As to the Covenanted Civil Service, it is asserted that the rule providing for the holding of examinations in England effectively bars the average Indian from participating, and thereby leaves the positions open mainly to Europeans.

CHAPTER III

THE GREAT EDUCATIONAL TASK

No more important and at the same time difficult task faces British India to-day than that involved in the education of its huge population.

Something of the magnitude of the educational problem set for the Government—a problem in which are largely bound up the future hopes of the country for self-government and progress along other lines—may be seen from the statement that 94 per cent. of the people are illiterate. Further, many millions are literally primitive folk who are treading the same paths that their ancestors trod centuries ago, and who not only have no desire for learning themselves, but in many cases regard with suspicion the introduction of schools into their communities. Incongruous as it may seem, British India ranks fairly well among the nations in higher education—so far at least as quantity is concerned—while in the matter of elementary training upon which the enlightenment of the masses depends, it is exceedingly backward.

One finds many conflicting opinions as to

32 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

how this great problem should be attacked. The story of the manner in which it is being approached and of the obstacles in the way of rapid advancement was told to me by the man who is reputed to have a more intimate knowledge of the Indian educational question than any other person in the country. He is Mr. H. Sharp, Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, who has spent years of study on the subject. Mr. Sharp spoke, not as an official of the Government, but in his private capacity, expressing his personal views. At the outset he referred briefly to the general condition of education in British India.

"Higher education is now well advanced—at least in quantity," he said. "Out of a total of 7,500,000 under instruction, just over 1,000,000 pupils are in colleges or secondary schools. These 1,000,000 pupils comprise 0·5 per cent. of the total population of British India. When we consider that the education of girls is almost non-existent, and that this figure must therefore be calculated against something rather larger than half the population, we then see that, as regards so-called higher education, India can hold her own amongst many of the civilised countries. Of course the secondary schools contain many pupils who are really in elementary stages. But that is the case in some other countries too."

“Elementary education, that is, the education of the masses as apart from the middle class, is very backward. So are the various forms of vocational education, especially industrial and commercial.

“But the chief thing is that, as I have said, the education of girls is practically non-existent. The female population in British India is nearly 119,000,000. But not much more than 1,000,000 girls are under instruction.

“The slow progress of mass education and the difficulties in the way of getting girls to school naturally make the total figures look very small. Of the male population, 5·1 per cent. are under instruction ; of the female, 1 per cent. ; of both together, 3·1 per cent. It is only in the higher education of boys that our figures will stand comparison with European countries, with America and with Japan.”

The Commissioner was asked what the difficulties were which were holding back mass education.

“There are four main retarding causes which arise from the circumstances of this country,” he replied. “First, there are many parts of the country where there is no tradition of education at all, save among certain restricted castes or classes. To realise the importance of this, it is necessary to remember that, especially outside the large cities, India is highly conservative.

34 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

Village life goes on apparently much as it did centuries ago.

“ Second, India is essentially an agricultural country. This largely accounts for the conservative character of the people. Moreover, many of them do not see the value of education, and they prefer to put their children early to work.

“ Third, there is the caste system. Millions of the population are regarded as doomed to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. Often the children of the untouchable castes, if allowed to come to school at all, are not allowed to sit near those more fortunately born. Till recently, it was regarded as almost an impious act for a member of a low caste to attain learning. Doubtless there are many who still so regard it, though in other quarters opinion has recently been liberalised. Some people say that the caste system is breaking up. It is still very deep-rooted. Its rules are doubtless loosening in some directions ; but they are also tightening in others.

“ The vital importance of the fourth reason is often not realised. It is the reaction exercised on the male population and its educational ideals by the female population which is to all intents and purposes utterly illiterate—only 1 per cent. of it can read and write. When half the population grows up practically illiterate, the incentive to education in the other half must be

sensibly lowered ; and, when home education is a thing almost unknown, the figures of literacy are affected, and education does not bulk as a customary and natural adjunct of life.

" Of course these causes do not operate to an equal degree in all parts of India. There are partial exceptions which prove the rule. In Burma there is a tradition of education through the monastic schools, there is no caste and there is no purda (under the purda system, which prevails among the upper classes throughout India, a woman can be seen unveiled by no man outside the members of her own family). Consequently, in that province, the percentage of literates in the male population is more than three times what it is in India as a whole. In the extreme south of India, too, the percentage of literacy is comparatively high ; there is a tradition of learning, and there is a strong Indian Christian community, in which caste and the purda are unknown. Bengal, Madras as a whole, and Bombay come next ; these provinces possess a comparatively long record of British rule, sea-boards, marketable crops, some industries and some traditions of learning. It is in the land-locked and highly agricultural provinces of upper India that things are most backward.

" There is a fifth cause, which is of a different kind. India is a poor country, though she is growing richer. The revenue is small for the

36 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

size of the country and the population. Much has to be met from it, such as communications, which are still defective in some parts of the country. More money is wanted. The present lack of it affects all kinds of education. Higher education partly pays for itself, through fees; but the quality needs improving. Elementary education falls mainly on provincial funds and the rates; the latter are not easily expansible."

In answer to a question as to whether, if more money were available, elementary education could be made universal on a voluntary basis, Mr. Sharp replied :

"I think that much can be done through the voluntary system; but that would be largely due to the gradual operation of other causes beside the application of funds. At the beginning of the present century, Lord Curzon devoted imperial funds to education. Again, between 1911 and 1915, imperial grants were allotted to education—over and above the amounts previously expended from provincial funds—amounting to some 48,400,000 rupees¹ non-recurring and 12,400,000 rupees recurring. A good deal of this went to elementary education. It has undoubtedly given it a stimulus.

"Since 1901-2, direct expenditure from all sources on primary schools has risen by 125 per

¹ An Indian rupee is equal to one shilling, four pence, English, or thirty-two cents, American.

cent. and the number of pupils by 70 per cent. This does not include those who are receiving elementary education in secondary schools, and it also ignores the fact that some expenditure and some pupils of Native States are included in the figures of 1901-2, but not in those of 1914-5.

"Of course part of this money has had to be spent on increasing the pay of teachers, which was deplorably low. Had this not been the case, it would have been possible to open more new schools and to show a larger increase. Nevertheless, it is not always found, in individual districts, that an increase in the number of schools is necessarily accompanied by an increase of pupils. Sometimes the reverse happens. There are some districts where the number of schools gives an average distribution of one for less than two square miles. Yet not nearly all the boys who could come get themselves enrolled.

"I remember the time when schools were most unpopular in many rural areas, and a certain amount of mild compulsion had to be locally enforced to keep the school open at all. Even in recent years I have seen new schools erected and drawing only half-a-dozen boys, when there were forty or fifty who lived within a half mile, could easily have come so far as distance was concerned, and would have had to pay no fees at all. But things are improving.

38 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

People are coming more and more to see that there is some utility in reading and writing."

I raised the much-debated question of whether resort should be had to compulsory education.

"The country is not yet ready for compulsion," replied Mr. Sharp. "You must, in a vast country like India and so conditioned, have mass education on a fairly solid basis before compulsion steps in to fill the gaps. At present compulsion would not be filling the gaps, but creating the fabric. That would be likely to raise great discontent. A progressive ruler in a Native State, who has done much to advance education in his state, gave his opinion as follows :

" ' Make primary education as free as you choose, add as many further inducements as you can, but do not make it compulsory. In the case of the most advanced classes, it is absolutely unnecessary and would serve only to create irritation. In the case of the poor backward classes it would inflict harm where good was meant, would subject them to great harassment, would be positively cruel and unjust, and would be deeply though silently resented as such.' "

Asked as to whether education could not be made compulsory in more advanced areas and this measure of compulsion gradually applied to others, the Commissioner said that this was probably what would happen.

" Already the Gaekwar of Baroda has made

education compulsory in his state and an experiment is being made in the state of Mysore," he continued. "In Baroda and the surrounding British territories the people are naturally rather appreciative of education. The number of those under elementary education in Baroda has risen greatly since compulsion was introduced, and stands now at 12 per cent. of the population. So far as one can judge, the results have been altogether satisfactory. But there would be some difficulty in applying to British India a similar measure, such as was proposed in the Imperial Legislative Council by the late Mr. Gokhale, the well-known Indian reformer. The population of Baroda is something over 2,000,000, which is not greater than that which will be found in some British districts. Indeed, one British district occurs to my mind, which has more than double the number of inhabitants found in Baroda.

"It is possible to introduce a measure over a limited area. But two conditions are necessary. First, the circumstances of the area must be promising for the success of the experiment. Second, the introduction of the measure, however ultimately beneficial, must not lead to its premature introduction elsewhere.

"There are parts of British India where the circumstances are just as promising as in Baroda, but these are not many. The second condition

is not fulfilled in British India. The administration is largely homogeneous throughout, and the introduction of a measure in one place would inevitably be followed by imitation in places not yet ripe for it. Then we should have the harassment and resentment feared by the Maharaja. Or, if this could be avoided the result would be unjust. For we should have compulsion introduced into the more forward and wealthier parts of a province at a cost which would certainly be great, and would have to be largely paid for by the less advanced and poorer parts which were not deemed yet ready to participate in the privilege. Here, again, Baroda is fortunate in being a small isolated area, self-contained and comparatively wealthy.

"The local rates could not pay for education. Even now, primary education, through the care of the Local and Municipal Boards, receives large subvention from the produce of general taxation. Mr. Gokhale did not think that local funds could contribute more than one-third of the increased cost involved in compulsion. He proposed to raise the rest through indirect taxation. It was noticeable, too, among the numerous opinions received on his Bill, that many local bodies, while expressing a general desire for compulsion, evinced no desire to be saddled with any of the cost of it; and some, perhaps with this possibility in mind, intimated

THE GREAT EDUCATIONAL TASK 41

that compulsion would be very beneficial everywhere else, but not just in their district.

"Mr. Gokhale said that compulsion would cost 45,000,000 rupees a year for boys. But his estimate was optimistic. It regarded only direct expenditure, making no allowances for training, inspection, etc. Nor did it allow for the necessary increase in the pay of teachers. This second element makes any real estimate out of the question. Most of our teachers, even with recent improvements, are very poorly paid, and not half of them are trained. It is difficult to get teachers at all—far more, suitable teachers. Any very large expansion must be preceded by an immense development of training facilities and accompanied by increase of pay and prospects. Otherwise the teachers will not be forthcoming."

Mr. Sharp said that the ultimate solution of the problem inevitably would be compulsion, but probably in the distant future.

"When the country as a whole is more ready for compulsion than it is now," he continued, "we shall have a limited application of the principle in selected areas which, in the conditions then obtaining, will be able to spread rapidly, and without ill effects to counterbalance its benefits, into other areas. How long? There might be compulsion in some municipal areas fairly soon. Their administration and conditions differ from rural areas, and they might be

42 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

treated separately. But the rural areas present a very different problem, and I would rather not prophesy. We have to remember that forty years ago the total number of pupils in both public and private institutions in India was only 1,750,000. Now it is 7,500,000."

The Commissioner turned to the defects of the educational system as it stands.

"It looks top-heavy," he said. "This is partly due to the slow expansion of mass as compared with higher education, and partly to the fact that many boys pursue the high-school and university course who would be better in technical, industrial, and commercial schools. The percentage of those who are in secondary and collegiate institutions is 0·47 per cent. of the total population, and 3·15 per cent. of the school population. But if we take the male population alone, the figures are 0·92 and 6·2. In the United States 1·5 per cent. of the total population is in high schools and colleges.

"A few years ago, I found that, out of the school population of the two countries, the proportion of those in India who were studying university courses was seven times the proportion in Japan, that of those in high schools eight times, and that of those in middle schools nearly three times; on the other hand, the proportion of those in Japan who are studying in normal schools was double the proportion in India, that

THE GREAT EDUCATIONAL TASK 43

of those in special schools four times, and that in technical schools twenty times.

"There are two reasons for the narrowness in higher education. First, the country is not industrially developed; if such development comes, industrial education will at once become popular. Second, boys follow the type of education which promises a safe career. I have had great difficulty sometimes in employing youths who have had industrial training abroad; and I can remember one or two cases of men who had received an agricultural education at Cirencester and who afterwards had to be put into ordinary civil employ—that is, on the strength of their general, not of their special, education. I believe one of these rose to be a judge."

Mr. Sharp stated that the number of graduates of arts being produced was not greater than the country required, and continued:

"There may be large production and lack of employment in certain areas, but that is not generally the case. The trouble is that many embark upon a college career and can't carry it through. As other walks of life become easier than those of government service and the learned professions, such boys will probably enter special institutions, will do better there and will certainly get a better chance in life. At present it is not easy to employ them."

44 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

The Commissioner's attention was called to the statement, often heard, that there is a great deal of cramming and unintelligent instruction in Indian schools.

"Unfortunately that is true," he said, "but not nearly to the same extent in different localities. The chief cause is poor teaching. Most of the higher institutions are managed by private bodies; for example, 80 per cent. of the high schools are so managed. The terms of service for the teachers are unattractive and often the managers pick up anyone they can—perhaps a man who looks on the job merely as a pot-boiler while he studies for the Bar. In these privately-managed high schools, out of a total of 14,904 teachers of English and classical languages, 11,649 are untrained. In these circumstances not much real teaching can be expected, and of course the boys have to cram.

"I once went into a school and looked at the books of the pupils. They none of them possessed the book they were supposed to be studying, but all were learning from the 'Key'—an expensive and worthless production full of elementary blunders. I then found that the teacher was also teaching out of the key and, like his pupils, had never seen the book and never intended to see it. Interference or remonstrance in such matters is often misunderstood and resented.

"A second cause is the tyranny of examinations. Owing to the unwieldy number of examinees, the matriculations have to be worked out through rather a mechanical system of marking. The standard to be obtained for a pass is very low compared with other countries. Even so, many fail—50 per cent. School-leaving certificates have been introduced to some extent, and have had good effects. But they are popularly decried as a means invented to restrict higher education; really they are disliked because they demand some proper teaching in the schools, and the result partly depends on how a boy goes through his school career; so, in a way, they constitute a more searching test.

"A third cause is the paucity of professors in many of the colleges. The proportion of students to professors is far higher than in most countries. Hence tutorial work, in the true sense of the term, is generally lacking, and reliance is placed upon lectures which the students are sometimes not in a position to understand.

"Now let me tell you something about the curricula. There has been great improvement in recent years, especially in the university curricula. Personally I should like to see a closer correlation in the subjects which can be combined and a closer approximation in regular schools of study. The chief defect is in English.

46 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

“Sufficient distinction is not drawn between English as a language and English literature. A good deal of poetry is set which the boys have difficulty in understanding. Hence time is wasted in explaining and paraphrasing passages into the spirit of which it is difficult for the boys to enter. This is less the case with epic and dramatic works, which are often appreciated, than with idyllic poetry. Take even a very simple piece. The other day I saw a paraphrase made by a candidate at the matriculation of Kingsley’s ‘Three Fishers.’ The candidate explained the line ‘though the harbour bar be moaning’ by ‘although the obstruction at the mouth of the harbour be emitting no sound.’ This signifies complete want of appreciation.

“Sometimes, too, the prose books are old-fashioned in language and allusive. More straightforward modern English is required. Of course it should be possible for a boy to take a school of English literature if he wishes. But he should not be compelled.

“The teaching of science has much improved. Practical work is insisted upon. There are many very fine laboratories in India. A good many students take one or more science subjects.

“The curricula in the primary schools are often abused as unpractical, as thin, or again as overloaded. I do not think these strictures are altogether justified. Considering the short

THE GREAT EDUCATIONAL TASK 47

time which most boys spend in a rural school, not much can be attempted—the three R's, a little elementary geography, and possibly some nature study. Manuscript reading, simple account keeping, the land record papers, and the elements of the law of landlord and tenant are taught in some provinces ; and I have no hesitation in saying that such subjects are of real value and are appreciated. Nature study is linked up with the simple principles of agriculture.

"It is poor teaching rather than the curriculum which is generally to blame for short-comings in elementary education. Too often subjects are taught as if they had no relation with reality. A friend of mine who was inspecting a village school, asked the teacher whether he taught that the sun went round the earth or the earth round the sun. He said he taught the latter doctrine, but, when pressed as to his convictions, asserted that he nevertheless believed the former. This unreality extends also to higher education. There is a tendency to look upon an examination subject as a sort of hurdle, freakishly set up as an obstacle in the race for employment, and not as a thing useful and interesting in itself. Of course one sees this in other countries too. But it is particularly marked in India, probably because the tradition of good teaching is not yet sufficiently established."

The Commissioner was asked what the effect

48 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

of elementary teaching, so far as it had advanced, had been upon the masses.

"The duration of school life is often not sufficient to allow a permanent impression to remain," he replied. "Much is forgotten—again a phenomenon by no means peculiar to India. But a boy who will stay at school for four or five years will at least retain the faculty of reading, writing, and simple computations. At the time he leaves school he will know a lot more. But there is very little stimulus in the village, and the women folk are generally quite uneducated; so, much of this fades away."

"The effect of higher education has been better than is usually allowed. English education has killed some bad customs and has undoubtedly made for a higher general standard. Any thoughtful Indian will tell you that. Many will also tell you that it has unsettled the minds of boys and made them irreligious, disrespectful, and discontented. That too is true, though I think not to anything like the extent often represented. You can't put new wine into old bottles, however skilfully, without courting trouble of some sort. In the present case the bottling is not always skilful. The trouble is sometimes aggravated by the half-baked notions bred of inferior teaching and by the false ideas of importance which some students attach to a cheap degree. But those matters will get

THE GREAT EDUCATIONAL TASK 49

cured in time. The things chiefly wanted are better teachers, more training, and a regular teaching profession. These things are much more important than curricula and appliances."

"How far is Western education likely to influence the mentality and general outlook of the people?" Mr. Sharp was asked.

"It has already had considerable influence in imposing Western methods of thought and conduct," the Commissioner said. "But of course this is only among small classes, and even there the Indian feeling, so to speak, is very strong. But there are two possibilities; if they arise they will greatly increase the effect of our education. We ought to be on the look-out for them. The first is the possibility of industrial development. The second is the possibility of a wide-spread relaxation of the purda system.

"A large part of the unreality of our education is due to the fact that only one-half of the country is capable of being educated. There is a great gulf fixed between the family on the one hand and the school or the college on the other. There are signs that the purda system is breaking down among certain classes, but these classes are small in numbers and one cannot say what is likely to happen. At present the education of girls is a social rather than an educational problem. One is up against a blank wall of passive resist-

50 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

ance. Until that has broken down very little can be done."

Mr. Sharp repeated in conclusion that the views he had put forward were entirely his own, and did not necessarily represent those of Government.

CHAPTER IV

THE INDUSTRIAL WAVE

INDIA, with all its wealth of resources, is now in a comparatively undeveloped state industrially, but a great wave of sentiment in favour of instituting measures to ensure immediate and substantial progress along this line undoubtedly is sweeping the country.

A concrete indication of the recognition of this feeling may be seen in the appointment by the Government of the Indian Industrial Commission, made up of prominent British and Indian experts, who for months have been making a country wide tour for the purpose of investigating industrial possibilities and rendering a report upon which the Government can inaugurate measures that will enable India to meet trade conditions after the war. In appointing this commission the Government announced that it believed the time had come to take up in a more comprehensive manner the question of the development of Indian industries and manufactures, and expressed sympathy with the eager

52 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

desire of a large number of the people for advancement.

The efforts of the Government in the past to build up new industries are said to have disclosed the existence of many difficulties. Indian capital has been unenterprising and timid, skilled labour has been lacking, and there has been a want of practical information regarding the commercial potentialities of India's raw products. As a result there are only two manufacturing industries of any magnitude. They are jute and cotton.

Outside these two businesses the country has depended largely on foreign nations or other parts of the British Empire for its manufactured goods. Huge quantities of raw materials of almost every description have been exported annually, and many of them have reappeared on the Indian markets in the manufactured form. The same ships which have brought in leather, oils, paper, iron and steel goods, dyes and various other products, have reloaded with the raw materials from which these very things were made.

* Industrial experts say that the Indian consumer probably has bought his goods as cheaply in most cases as he could if they had been manufactured at home, but that India has sacrificed the financial gain and other advantages accruing to the country which has its own factories. For one thing, the producer of raw materials, having

no alternative market, has been forced to accept the prices quoted him from abroad, and many times the figures have been excessively low. It is held that the establishment of a home market would protect him against such losses. The Indian working man, too, has suffered in that the higher wages which might have been coming to him have been going into the pockets of foreign artisans. Outside the actual monetary question, great stress is being laid on the national stability obtained by the country which has its working classes profitably employed.

The commission appointed to investigate this great question is made up of ten experts, headed by Sir Thomas Holland, President of the Institution of Mining Engineers of the United Kingdom, and widely known as an industrial authority. The scope of inquiry is most comprehensive. In the main the commission has been preparing itself to suggest the most profitable lines of action, with the object of drawing out capital now idle, of building up an artisan population, of carrying on the scientific and technical researches required to test the known raw materials and to design and improve processes of manufacture, of distributing the information obtained from researches and from the results of experience in other countries, and of developing the machinery for financing industrial undertakings and marketing products.

54 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

There are numerous industrial enterprises which many feel may be embarked upon profitably in the near future. Among these is the leather industry. India exports great quantities of hides. Heretofore most of these have been sent to America and Germany to be tanned, and it is said that there is no reason why this work should not be done at home. The other leading possibilities include the pressing of oil from oil-seeds, the manufacture of paper pulp, the making of glass, the production of dyes from the plentiful raw materials at hand, and the extraction of perfumes, essential oils, and drugs. There is also room for great expansion in the iron and steel industries, which are still in their infancy, as well as in the working of aluminium, tin, zinc, and copper.

One of the important questions to be solved by the commission was as to the form which Government aid to new industries should take. It has been generally predicted that the Government will be prepared to render technical assistance, possibly through the establishment of central research laboratories; and will also give financial aid in some form, either direct or indirect. That Government backing will be necessary to create confidence and draw capital is generally conceded by most students of the problem.

Among the methods of Government financial

aid which have been suggested for the consideration of the commission are these: supply of machinery and plant by the Government on the hire-purchase system ; guaranteed dividends for a limited period, with or without subsequent refund to the Government of the expenditure incurred in paying dividends at the guaranteed rate ; guaranteed purchase of products for limited periods ; concessions of land ; special railway transport facilities and rates ; bounties and subsidies ; pioneering industries and handing them over to private companies, and loan of services of expert Government employees.

The industrial development of the country has not, of course, been at a standstill up till now. Great strides have been made in the cotton and jute industries, and steady progress, though slow, may be seen in agriculture, which is the mainstay of Hindustan. In travelling about India I often heard it remarked by business men that the country was more prosperous than ever before in its history. I turned to Sir William Meyer, Finance Member in the Government of India, for a verification of this claim.

“Economically the India of to-day is more prosperous than she ever was before,” said Sir William. “According to Western ideas she is still a very poor country, but she is advancing, as I can testify emphatically after a service of thirty-five years here; and the Government have

56 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

done all they could to help this advance. There has been great development in India's agricultural and industrial enterprises, and the Government have just recently taken another step in the appointment of a strong commission to consider the possibilities of further industrial growth.

"Since 1900 the progress has been remarkable, as is shown by the statistics for the first ten years of the new century. Between 1900 and 1910 the number of cotton mills in British India increased from 177 to 210, and the persons employed from 145,000 to 215,000. The production of yarn during the decade rose from 343,000,000 to 593,000,000 pounds, and of woven goods from 95,000,000 to 215,000,000 pounds. Jute mills increased in number from 36 to 60, and the persons employed from 110,000 to 204,000. Further, the percentage of manufactured goods imported into India as compared with the total imports has been steadily falling, while the percentage of manufactured goods among the exports has been simultaneously rising."

Agriculture, he pointed out, is the main industry of the country, and since 1895 the net area estimated to be under crops has increased more than 30,000,000 acres. He continued :

"We have suffered, naturally, in various directions from the war, and at one time we were threatened with crises affecting the culti-

vators in respect of the jute and cotton industries. These have, however, been successfully surmounted, and at present these industries are in a prosperous condition, and the cotton ryot (farmer) in particular is getting very good prices for his produce."

Sir William was asked how the additional wealth which had accrued to India was distributed.

"This," he replied, "is a question very difficult to answer, seeing that we have to deal with a sub-continent with a population, if we include that of the Native States, of over 315,000,000. A good deal of money is hoarded, since the traditions which grew up during many generations of insecure government are not easily shaken; but deposits in banks have increased considerably. There has been a very considerable increase in the standard of comfort of the people; and the rise in prices, which has occurred in India as well as in Western countries, has materially benefited her agricultural and industrial population, though it has pressed hardly on members of the professional middle classes. There are also a certain number of capitalists—mill-owners, jute manufacturers, and the like—who make in some years very large profits. The fact remains, however, that, taking India as a whole, she is still very poor as compared with Western standards."

58 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

The question of the average income per head of the population of British India was brought up.

"That is a matter which it is impossible to estimate with accuracy," said Sir William. "In 1880 Sir David Barbour made some calculations of the quantity and value of agricultural produce in India, and, relying on certain very broad assumptions, with a view to expressing the results arrived at in the form of average income, he suggested the figure of 27 rupees per head of population as possibly representing very roughly the average annual income of an Indian. In 1901 Lord Curzon, working on the same lines, came to the conclusion that if the figure 27 rupees was an approximately correct index of average income in 1880, the figure 30 rupees would be approximately correct in 1901.

"These figures cannot pretend to statistical accuracy, but it may be confidently asserted that the wealth of India has increased materially during the last generation. Agricultural produce has been increased, largely owing to assistance by the Government, not merely by loans to cultivators, but in respect of the introduction of better seeds, plants, implements, etc., and the development of irrigation works; while external commerce has grown, and the expansion of railway communications has materially assisted the producer and trader. As I have

already indicated, our great export staples, cotton and jute, have largely developed; and Government officials who have mixed with the people for a long time, and fair-minded outside observers, such as missionaries, would all concur in saying that the standard of comfort has risen considerably.

“I may add, too, that the Government have promoted a co-operative credit movement, which has been a great success, and the effect of which is to encourage the ryots to help each other and to free them from debts to local usurers.”

CHAPTER V

THE AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

THE most important phase of India's industrial life, agriculture, is confronting the Government with a problem which is characterised in many quarters as the greatest of its kind ever thrust upon any country. It is that of showing the Indian farmer the way to progress.

The Peninsula, with a farming population in British India alone of more than 177,000,000, presents many unique and seemingly unsurmountable obstacles to speedy educational advancement for the tiller of the soil, for here must be considered not only the matter of finance, but the widespread illiteracy, and the antiquated Oriental customs which have become fixed through centuries of usage. While I was in Simla in the fall of 1916, the Member for Agriculture in the Government of India, Sir Claude Hill, gave me a most interesting account of what husbandry means to Hindustan, and what his department hopes to accomplish in the way of education.

"Though it is a platitude to state that India is primarily an agricultural country," said Sir Claude, "I doubt whether to European or American minds that conveys any notion of the magnitude of the agricultural interests in British India. It may help matters if I give you a few details.

"The population of India is about one-fifth of the whole world, and at the census of 1911 the population of British India was returned at 244,000,000, of whom no fewer than 177,936,000 were engaged in one way or another on agriculture. The gross area under cultivation has risen since 1895 from about 214,000,000 acres to about 250,000,000 acres. The net area, that is to say, excluding the double count of areas which are cropped more than once, has risen in the same period from 189,000,000 acres to about 220,000,000 acres. What is, however, perhaps more remarkable, is that the acreage commanded by irrigation in British India has risen from about 26,737,000 acres in 1895-6 to more than 46,836,000 acres in 1913-14—the last year for which I as yet have complete returns.

"As regards the more important crops raised for export, it may be interesting to know that in 1913-14 there were 25,000,000 acres under cotton, giving an out-turn of over 5,000,000 bales, 28,500,000 acres under wheat, producing eight and one-third million tons, nearly 75,500,000

62 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

acres under rice, producing 575,000,000 hundred-weight in round figures, about 3,000,000 acres under jute, producing 9,000,000 bales, and 610,000 acres under tea, producing 307,000,000 pounds. The aggregate value of these crops was approximately 6,000,000,000 rupees.

“These represent perhaps the principal crops in which the outside world is interested, but it is necessary in considering the grain output in India to remember that over very large tracts of country the staple food of the people is not wheat or rice, but some form of millet or pulse, usually denominated jawar or bajri. The out-turn in India of these two crops was in 1914-15 nearly 7,500,000 tons. Even these, of course, do not exhaust the acreage and out-turn of food crops, since there is a very great number of other grains which feed the people in different parts of the country. The variety in staple food grains reflects not only the relative prosperity of the people, but also the climatic conditions and racial and hereditary characteristics, of which there is an infinite variety.

“Another point which is perhaps not generally appreciated is the extraordinary variety of climatic conditions prevalent over different parts of India. The Madras Presidency is the only province of India in which the conditions may be said to be wholly tropical, while all the northern provinces are almost exclusively sub-tropical. Conditions

of soil vary, of course, as much as the conditions of climate and race. It will be realised, therefore, that the problems confronting the agricultural department of India are, in variety and difficulty, hardly to be approached in any other country in the world.

"For many years the attempts to improve the methods of cultivation in India were sporadic and very local. It was assumed for a long time that novel methods were probably foreign to the genius of the people as well as ill-adapted to the soil and other conditions; and it is only very recently that the Government of India have become alive to the enormous developments which are possible in the direction of improving the agricultural conditions of the country.

"Prior to 1904, when Lord Curzon's Government initiated the formation of a properly organised Agricultural Department, development depended very much on the idiosyncrasies of the various local governments, and I am afraid that such endeavours as were made in the direction of improving methods and of developing agricultural out-turn were very far from being either scientific or consistent. In 1904, however, partly with the assistance of a public-spirited American citizen, Mr. Henry Phipps, of Chicago, Lord Curzon was able to establish a properly-organised staff of agricultural officers under the Government of India with their

64 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

headquarters at Pusa in Bihar, and also to bring into being provincial agricultural establishments with the object of serving not only the interests of scientific research, but also of encouraging improved agricultural methods adapted to the local conditions of each province.

“Compared with the agricultural department of the United States, the establishment at present engaged in India is exceedingly small. At Pusa, the headquarters of the agricultural service, where the Central Research Institute is established, and where there is a large experimental farm, seventeen officers are employed, and it was to the establishment of this institution that the benefaction of Mr. Phipps was devoted. In the nine major provinces of India there are at present seventy-two officers of the department.

“A total imperial staff of eighty-nine officers must strike you as extraordinarily inadequate for the work to be done in a huge country like India with such diverse conditions of soil, climate, and people. But this body of eighty-nine is, of course, only the superior or imperial staff, under whom are employed a very considerable number of subordinates, practically all of whom are natives of India. This represents the administrative and what may be termed the farming side of the agricultural service. On the other side, there is, in every major province, an agricultural institution, collegiate or other-

THE AGRICULTURAL SITUATION 65

wise, on the staff of which are a few scientific officers whose duties include both research and teaching.

“The inadequacy of the strength of the present staff is fully realised, and there is at this moment under consideration a scheme which, if it comes into being, will result in an immediate increase of the imperial staff by about 30 per cent., distributed throughout the provinces.

“It is hoped that by this measure we shall be able to place every major province in India in a condition of self-continen~~c~~e in regard to research matters, and also considerably to strengthen their teaching side. It is not to be pretended that the contemplated increase will entirely meet the needs of the situation, but it will be readily understood that the war has affected the finances of India very adversely, and that for some period after the war there will be many demands upon the Government’s purse, and that the development of the Agricultural Department is only one of the many directions in which progress will be demanded.

“Regarding the establishment of agricultural colleges in India, I am afraid we must admit that a commencement was not made as soon as it should have been. It was not until three years after the initiation of the Agricultural Department by Lord Curzon that the Nagpur Agricultural College came into being in the

66 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

Central Provinces, to be followed shortly by the inauguration of the Pusa Institute, the Poona Agricultural College for the Bombay Presidency, the Coimbatore Agricultural College for Madras, the Lyallpur Agricultural College for the Punjab, the Sabour Agricultural College for Bengal, and, finally, the Cawnpore Agricultural College for the United Provinces, the last named having developed into a college as lately as November 1911..

“On their first inauguration these colleges were quite frankly designed only for the teaching of agriculture to a standard which would fit men for the subordinate appointments of the service. The idea of establishing institutions which would teach up to the standard common in European and American agricultural colleges was not entertained until a year or two later, when the Poona Agricultural College led the way by becoming affiliated to the Bombay University. This example is, it is hoped, shortly to be followed by the Lyallpur Agricultural College (which has applied, or is about to apply, for affiliation to the University of Punjab), and by other colleges in the near future.

“In connection with this development of agricultural teaching, it may interest you if I refer for a moment to the political side of the question. Although hitherto it has been absolutely necessary that recruiting for the superior services connected with agriculture should take

place in Europe and other more advanced countries, we desire, of course, as soon as it is possible, to associate in the higher service as large a number of Indians as can be induced to take up agriculture and to qualify themselves in its higher branches, both for the research and for the administrative sides of the department.

"To secure this it is absolutely necessary to develop our Indian colleges as highly as possible; and it is for this reason and with this end in view, that the Government of India are particularly anxious to encourage provinces to organise their colleges in such a way as to be able to turn out graduates qualified to take their place, both in research and in practical agriculture, side by side with those who have hitherto been recruited from Western countries.

"In regard to the improvement of agriculture generally throughout the country, many difficulties have to be faced. There are inbred customs and old tradition. These, of course, are, in some cases, based upon sound experience; but some, nevertheless, are rooted in prejudice, and the problem of how best to inculcate sound economic methods of farming broadcast throughout the country is one of the most difficult conceivable. Here again a factor of the greatest importance, if we are to succeed, is to encourage Indians to take up the study of agriculture and to spread the knowledge which they may acquire

68 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

at such institutions as we are able to bring into being.

“ Speaking generally, we rely at present upon two main methods of disseminating a sound knowledge of agricultural principles and practice. The first of these, analogous to what I understand are so common in the United States, is demonstration farms. The second is vernacular instruction in agriculture.

“ I have been informed that in America demonstration farms very largely consist of the farms of individual farmers lent for the purpose and farmed by the farmer himself under the general advice and control of an agricultural expert. Here in India it is not always easy to persuade a farmer to modify his methods in accordance with the advice of officers of the department. We have, therefore, in the provinces in India, established demonstration farms at different centres which are controlled by the administrative staff of the department under the immediate management of a farm superintendent. These demonstration farms are distributed throughout the country, so far as possible in typical localities, and the opportunity is taken of growing on these farms any improved and standardised varieties of crops suited to the peculiarities of the locality.

“ It is satisfactory to be able to say that in the case of some varieties of crops very con-

THE AGRICULTURAL SITUATION 65

siderable improvement has already resulted. Where the Indian farmer is persuaded that practical benefit results from adopting particular methods of cultivation or in using particular kinds of seeds, he is by no means backwards in taking advantage of such improvements.

“ In the Punjab, where the farmer is unusually well off and remarkably intelligent, and where—and this is most important—he has larger holdings than in most other provinces, he has readily taken to an American variety of cotton which has been proved to be suited to the climatic conditions of the province. There is reason to hope that the country variety of short-staple cotton will almost disappear from the Punjab in favour of this American variety. Similarly, more than one variety of wheat has been established, the best of which we hope soon to see grown on a very large scale in supersession of inferior articles. The same tale could be told of other provinces and in relation to other crops, indicating that despite our inadequate staff we have already certain very promising results to show. •

“ I should like here to mention that we are indebted to a no inconsiderable extent to an American mission situated in the United Provinces near Allahabad under Mr. S. Higginbotham. Mr. Higginbotham is an enthusiastic agriculturist, and has unquestionably succeeded

70 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

in popularising improved methods and in demonstrating their economic success in a degree which very greatly contributes to encourage the people to go in for novel methods. We have also received considerable assistance in suggestion from studying the proceedings of the General Education Board in America.

"One other development of recent years, synchronising in its start with the initiation of the Agricultural Department as an organised entity, is the co-operative movement. Co-operative credit was legally established in this country in 1904, and the movement, as reflected by the number of societies and the amount of capital involved, has progressed by leaps and bounds. One of the chief difficulties in the way of the development of agriculture in India consists in the small size of the holdings in many parts of the country and the consequent lack of capital in the possession of the farmer. Moreover, custom in India, in connection with marriage and other ceremonial occasions, demands a heavy toll on the part of all classes of the community, however humble.

"The result of this has been a weight of indebtedness, which is largely responsible for the poverty of the agriculturists. When the occasion arises on which a farmer has to marry his son or his daughter or to perform any of the innumerable ceremonials connected with his

domestic life, he has in the past invariably had recourse to the village money lender, who not unnaturally, in view of the inadequate security offered, has demanded a high rate of interest for such accommodation as he has given. Similarly, when a farmer has desired to improve his holding, perhaps by the construction of a well or the purchase of bullocks, he has been compelled to resort to the same quarter, and has paid a rate of interest which sometimes amazes those not familiar with Indian conditions. "

"The Indian statute book of the past half-century contains many examples of the attempts of Government to devise means for the relief of the agriculturist from the load of indebtedness which has thus accumulated round his neck, but none of these, prior to the passage of the Co-operative Credit Societies' Act, had the result so much desired. The Co-operative Credit movement seemed to offer a solution of the difficulty, and indeed, since the passage of the Act, the results have far surpassed the anticipations of the most sanguine supporters of the measure.

"In 1909 there were 2,008 societies in India, and in the year 1914-15 the total of registered societies numbered 17,327. Hitherto the main purpose of these societies, which are of unlimited liability, has been the advance of money to individual cultivators for specific purposes, but

72 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

the movement is rapidly developing, and progress along lines analogous to those adopted by the Agricultural Organisation Society in Ireland is already marked. There is room to hope that in the co-operative system may be discovered the remedy, so long sought, for the tendency to thriftlessness which in the past has caused agriculture to be so heavily handicapped."

CHAPTER VI

THE MAGIC OF IRRIGATION

THE wonders that have already been worked by irrigation in India cannot be overlooked in considering the possibilities for advancement in agriculture. While I was in the Punjab Province I took the opportunity of visiting the Lyallpur District, which is an amazing demonstration of what modern irrigation can do.

Only a few years ago this district of Northern India was an arid waste, producing no vegetation excepting the scrubby desert shrub, and virtually uninhabited but for the few wandering tribesmen who eked out a precarious existence by grazing their meagre flocks of half-starved cattle on the scattered patches of green. To-day it is one of the garden spots of the country. Luxuriant fields of grain and sugar-cane and cotton wave over the places where only the hardy little shrub had dared to raise its head before ; on the sites of the nomads' camps stand hundreds of flourishing villages, and long lines of rock-ballasted highways stretch out through the recently tractless

74 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

reaches beneath the shade of rows of quickly-growing Oriental trees.

The story of how this transformation was wrought is the history of what is said to be the greatest irrigation system in the world. The waters of the Chenab river, which formerly flowed on their wasteful way towards the sea, have now been diverted through great man-made channels that cross and re-cross the Lyallpur district, turning the dry soil into fertile tracts. In the past twenty years more than a million people have been drawn to the lands watered by these canals, and to-day the Chenab Colony, as it is called, is the greatest wheat-producing centre in India, and one of the most important for its size in the world.

The Chenab Colony is one of many striking irrigation enterprises carried out by the Government in India in the past few years. In the last two decades the area of land under irrigation throughout the country has nearly doubled, bringing prosperity to parts of India where the uncertainties of rainfall discouraged or even entirely prevented all cultivation. The total capital value of major irrigation works, part of which are protective and part productive, throughout the country is more than 710,000,000 rupees.

The area of culturable land commanded by these irrigation works is approximately 50,000,000

acres. Of these irrigation works the largest are situated in the Punjab Province, where the river system is especially adapted for the development of enterprises of this sort. The productive irrigation works in the Punjab alone have a capital value of 212,100,000 rupees, and the Chenab Colony waterways form the biggest link in the Punjab chain.

Something of how the Chenab Colony was brought into being, and of what it is doing, was told to me by Mr. A. J. W. Kitchin, deputy commissioner, that is, chief officer, of the Lyallpur District, within which five-sixths of the colony lies. Mr. Kitchin is known in India as a specialist in organisation, and two years ago was sent to this new colony for the purpose of setting up the same government machinery as exists in the older districts of British India. The Commissioner was most enthusiastic in speaking of the success of the colony.

"We Punjab officials," he said, "believe, and we challenge any contradictions, that the Chenab Canal is the biggest and most successful irrigation scheme that has ever been carried out in the world. There are, counting all the major and minor branches, 2,704 miles of waterway. Roughly speaking, the canal at the head carries 12,000 cubic feet of water per second—six times as much as the Thames above London. It irrigates 2,250,000 acres of land every year, and

76 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

it supports in prosperity a population of 1,250,000. Last and not least, it brings in to the Government of India a return of 40 per cent. and upwards on the capital cost of 32,500,000 rupees. In the Lyallpur District alone I have to collect 12,500,000 rupees every year, more than double as much as any other district in the Punjab.

“ Twenty-five years ago nothing grew here, and the population consisted of a few thousand nomad tribesmen who wandered about grazing cattle and stealing where they could. In less than twenty years, 1,935 villages have been built, and the inhabitants have increased in number from 14,000 or so to 1,250,000, who are living in a land of plenty. Where else can you find anything like it? There were great engineers connected with the project, but the canal grew with success, and there is no one man who can say that he alone was responsible for it.

“ I myself have been here only two years, but I know something of the early days, and I personally secured many of the pioneer colonists; indeed, one village bears my wholly undistinguished name. At first no one would take the land, despite the fact that it could be had for nothing. It seemed inconceivable to the people that this waste could be turned into fertile tracts, and they shook their heads and sought farms elsewhere. These were the hardest days of all.

"Then came success and the rush. The first luxuriant crops produced a sensation, and there was a stampede for lands. It was as though a great gold field had suddenly been discovered in this desert tract.

"One who only sees the completed work, the well-built highways, the highly-cultivated fields, the thronging villages, and the markets stacked with grain, can form but little idea of the early days when the colony officer laboured to settle the vast crowds of people and the irrigation officers to give them water. I have been out distributing land when the rush began. Crowds surrounded my tent day and night, clamouring for grants. There was no privacy, no peace, and no rest. I could neither bathe nor eat except in public, so to speak, and my sleep was disturbed at night. It is a far reach from those times to what you see to-day.

"The unit of area here is the square, which contains approximately twenty-eight and a half acres, and the whole country is laid out on this plan. The smallest grant made was generally one square, and the larger grants varied up to one hundred.

"About fifty squares make up a village. Forty were allotted for cultivation; each headman got an extra square, and a square was reserved for the village servants—the watchman, the carpenter, the blacksmith, and so on. Another

78 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

square or more was set aside for the site of the village, which had to be built on a standard plan. The rest was kept clear for grazing and open space.

"In those days all the land belonged to the Government. Government selected the colonists and preserved their roads, their houses, and their shares. Now the tenants have all become owners, and it is my special mission to end the old days of paternal administration, to make the people stand on their own feet, and to introduce the ordinary Indian administration of a free and independent population of peasant farmers.

"Now let me tell you something of our trade and of the crops raised here. The Lyallpur foreign wheat trade is the largest in India, and this is one of the most important centres for its size in the world. We send abroad from this district alone some 300,000 tons of wheat a year. All the largest markets in India are in this district, and we sell only locally-grown wheat. We have no elevators working, and personally I do not believe in them for India. Labour is cheap and abundant, communications good, railways numerous. The wheat goes off to Karachi, which is our port. The farmer can always sell and be paid, and the railway goods receipts circulate as security for value. The elevator system offers no apparent advantages over the present method, and all the trade is opposed to it.

"Next in importance to the wheat comes the cotton trade. We produce some 25,000 tons of unginned cotton annually. The indigenous cotton plant is poor enough, but it is rapidly being replaced by the American, which is much better. Of raw sugar we export from this district about 4,000 tons a year, and of oil seeds some 30,000 tons.

"The cultivation of the Lyallpur District is so large for its population that the surplus produce for export is great. For instance, three-quarters of the wheat goes abroad. The total wheat crop in the Chenab Colony is valued at about 50,000,000 rupees and the cotton at upwards of 5,000,000. The yield of unginned cotton per acre is about one-fourth of a ton. The average yield of wheat is approximately one-half of a ton. We raise many other crops in the Chenab Colony, of course, rice bringing in nearly 2,000,000 rupees, maize more than 2,250,000, millet over 1,250,000, rape and mustard seed upwards of 7,000,000, and fodder crops 80,000,000.

"There is another important side of the canal administration which sometimes escapes notice. Every headman holds a square, and for that square has to raise a mule each year. Government buys the young stock, and last year purchased about 1,100 young mules for the army. The neighbouring Jhelum Colony is partly held on

horse-breeding conditions, and the Government bought nearly 500 young remounts from this section last year. A number of villages in our district are held on camel-breeding terms. Every square has to provide a camel with a driver to be available for Government service when needed. About 5,000 of these camels with their drivers were called up for duty in the army last year, half of them being sent to Egypt, and the rest to the Afghan frontier. The army, I may add, was exceedingly glad to get these animals.

"The agricultural development of the Chenab Colony is controlled by the Punjab Agricultural College, which is located here in Lyallpur. We are very backward in India, but now we have made a start in agricultural improvements, and the beginning is rich in promise for the future. Elaborate machinery does not pay here. Labour is comparatively cheap, and so instead of attempting to introduce Western labour-saving devices we have been trying to improve the indigenous methods. Seed selection is very important, and the agricultural department, working with the peasant agricultural associations, is doing great things.

"The tale of the cotton crop promises to be as interesting in the future developments of the colony as any part of its unique history. The old-country cotton with its one-half-inch staple is being driven off the lands by American cotton

THE MAGIC OF IRRIGATION 81

with a staple of five-sixths of an inch. The American cotton is giving a better yield, and the market price is 25 per cent. higher. This change has come within the last five years, and so fast is the American cotton replacing the Indian that we hope the country cotton will have disappeared in a year or two more. This has all been done by the agricultural department and the associations of farmers through which it works.

"In many other ways improvements are being made. The Indian farmer is not less receptive of new ideas than the small and uneducated farmer in any country. The department itself is only learning its work, and is learning cautiously and slowly. Consciousness of ignorance is the foundation of success in India. We all have to learn, and if we do not begin at the bottom we do not learn at all.

"The irrigation problems are full of interest. The Punjab teaches irrigation to the world. In agricultural science we are beginners, but we hope and believe that Lyallpur will teach agriculture to the whole Punjab, and that a greater future awaits the sturdy Punjab farmer with whom we English officers spend our lives, and with whose prosperity the future of British rule is linked.

"And while we are discussing the Chenab Colony there is one matter which it is only fair

82 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

to mention. For years the Lyallpur District has borne an evil reputation as the most corrupt, the most seditious, and the most criminal in the Punjab. This reputation, which in the past undoubtedly was merited, arose from conditions that were due to a variety of causes. The corruption was the result of the prosperity of the people. The sedition had its origin in the continued agitation for the grant of ownership rights, which was sanctioned in 1912. The crime was due partly to the heterogeneous character of the population, and still more to the predatory habits of the old nomad population who had settled down to unwilling agriculture. Of late years there has been much improvement. Sedition no longer exists; corruption has decreased greatly, and there is far less crime than there was."

The Commissioner was asked what effect the war had produced on his district.

"The war has done us all a lot of good," he replied. "The English are now more popular than at any time for years past. Unquestionably the main effect of the conflict on the people has been to draw them closer to the Government, and they are united to support the administration to a greater degree than I have ever known before. Our rule as a power dominates, but no one wants to change the British rule for another. They are afraid of change. They do not want

to be ruled by the Germans, whom they believe to be a government of bogey men with supernatural powers.

“I have exercised a good deal of rough-and-ready practical power for many years, but I have never known a time when an Englishman was more respected and when the yea and nay or even the expressed opinion of a British officer carried so much weight or was obeyed so readily by all classes.”

CHAPTER VII

THE TRUTH ABOUT SEDITION

IN a discussion of progress in India the query naturally arises as to the truth of the many stories that have been published abroad at various times to the effect that Hindustan was seething with sedition and was likely to break out in revolt at any moment.

From the beginning of the war German press agents and anti-British propagandists kept the newspapers in neutral countries well supplied with alarming reports of pending trouble in India. So persistent were these statements, and so few were the pronouncements offered in contradiction of them, that even fair-minded people began to think that where there was so much smoke there must be at least a little fire. Bearing these stories in mind, one of the first things that I did upon arriving in India was to start an investigation of my own to determine the truth.

To all outward appearances India was as peaceful as an English countryside, but the waters of sedition run deep, and in an effort to

ook beneath the surface and learn the facts I interviewed many people—Americans, British officials and business men, Indian Princes, Indian subjects of varying rank in private life, and conservative and radical Indian politicians, both Mohammedan and Hindu. I found little divergence in their opinions, the gist of which was that there was no fear of anything like an armed revolt in India.

One of the most striking answers which I received to my questions was from the Viceroy, to whom I turned for an official expression. His Excellency spoke of the surprise with which he had read variously highly-coloured articles in American papers, purporting to depict conditions in India, and representing the country as labouring under an oppressive rule, and shaken by revolutionary and seditious activities.

“The British Government,” continued Lord Chelmsford, “has not deigned formally to repudiate such calumnies—perhaps this has been a mistake—but for my part the reply which I give you is this simple one :

“Go wherever you please throughout the length and breadth of India. Study our work and study our difficulties. No sentry will bar the way, and no secret agent will shadow you. Talk to whom you please ; do what you please, and then write what you please. In India we have nothing to conceal.”

86 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

Now the significance of this crisp statement lay in the fact that if there had been any indication of serious trouble in the country the Government of India certainly would not have permitted a foreign newspaperman to send out broadcast stories of sedition, to be trafficked on by the Germanic Powers. But I was permitted to go my way, and here is what I found :

There is great unrest in India, but it has little in common with sedition. It is a healthy unrest, the evidence of a yearning for better things. It is the type of disquiet that has made great nations what they are, an agitation without which progress must cease and decay set in.

The great majority of India's millions are peace-loving folk, who are opposed to all ideas of revolutionary bloodshed. The illiterate class has little or no interest in politics. The educated people of the law-abiding section, whether they be ultra-radical home-rule advocates or not, desire to remain a part of the British Empire, feeling that the protection of Great Britain is essential to the welfare of India. Most of them look forward to the time when India will occupy a position similar to that of the Dominions ; some assert that India is ready "for the change now, but they all profess to hope that they may achieve their aims by peaceful methods, and in any event do not desire a total severance from England.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SEDITION 87

There is a certain amount of seditious unrest in various sections, but the people who harbour revolutionary ideas are negligible in number. There is, strictly speaking, no revolutionary "party" in India. There are numbers of small bodies of seditionists in different parts of the country, but these cliques are more or less independent of one another. They are composed largely of men who have received a smattering of higher European education. Now a *little* higher Western learning is truly a dangerous thing for the average Oriental. In trying to grasp the advanced ideals of the West, his untrained mind often reaches a distorted conclusion. It is not a far reach from a mind which is naturally excitable, and which has been unbalanced by false ideas, to sedition.

Most of these revolutionists have studied with the idea of entering Government service. Naturally, there are not enough Civil Service positions to go round, and as these men feel that, having acquired polish, they are above returning to the trades of their fathers, they find themselves without means of making a livelihood. For this they blame the Government. Idleness brings them together for discussion of their alleged wrongs, and they prove fertile ground for the professional agitator to work upon.

The thoughts of the totally illiterate people revolve mainly about their personal affairs. If

88 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

they have enough food to stay their hunger and a place in the sun, they are content. The question of who is ruling them does not bother them in the least. Many of them undoubtedly have never heard of England, or any other place outside their own little sphere, and it would be difficult to convince them that they ought to rise in arms to oust the governing power, so long as their simple wants are supplied.

In a country the size of India there is always a probability that local troubles may occur. Things are quiet at the moment, but it would be unsafe to predict that seditionists might not to-morrow stir up feeling which would result in local disturbances. Such events have occurred since the beginning of the war, the most serious attempt having been made in the Punjab as the result of a conspiracy developed among the Indian emigrants on the Pacific Coast of America, largely in California, Oregon, and British Columbia.

Between five and six thousand seditionists made their way home and into the Punjab, where for months they vainly endeavoured to cause general disaffection among the Indian troops and the people. There were murders and other outrages, but the attempt failed, largely because the people, having no sympathy with the movement, voluntarily turned to the aid of the Government and helped arrest many of the offenders.

In view of the fact that this Punjab conspiracy is characterised as the most pretentious since the never-to-be-forgotten Mutiny of 1857, it may not be amiss to give the details of it here, as showing the temper of India.

This anti-British plot was put into execution in the great Punjab Province, with its 25,000,000 inhabitants, at a time when India was virtually denuded of troops, which had been sent to the various theatres of war. But the Punjab ship of state, with Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the British Lieutenant-Governor, at the helm, safely weathered the storm—a storm that might have swept all India had the conspirators met with the sympathy which they had expected among their people. The story of the plan of revolt was related to me by Sir Michael O'Dwyer himself as follows :

“The history of this conspiracy is one of the most remarkable in the annals of India, and it is a history with a moral. It demonstrates that while there are political aspirations in India, as there are and must be in any country which allows freedom of thought and liberty of action, yet the vast majority of the people have no sympathy with revolutionary ideas. The failure of the plot is an answer to the many stories which have been published abroad to the effect that the powder train was laid in India and needed only the application of fire to set it off.

"The conspiracy in question had as its two main centres San Francisco and Vancouver, the former city ultimately eclipsing the latter. The plot goes back to the beginning of 1913 when one Bhagwan Singh, a notorious Indian seditionist, went to Vancouver and began to lecture among the Indians there, most of them ignorant men who had lost touch with their religion and traditions and fell an easy prey to specious agitation and sedition mongers against the British Government in India. The grievances of the Indians, real or imaginary, in regard to the immigration regulations had prepared the ground. After a short time Bhagwan Singh was deported, but he had sown the seed of sedition before he left.

"There also arrived in San Francisco about the same time a seditionist by the name of Hardial, the real brains of the conspiracy which was developed. Hardial, who, by the way, is now believed to be in Germany, is a man of great intellectual attainments and a brilliant speaker, but unfortunately entirely unscrupulous. He was educated at Oxford as a State scholar by the Government of India, and appears while in England, and perhaps even earlier, to have become imbued with a passionate race hatred which developed into monomania. After leaving Oxford, he devoted his energies to teaching his countrymen the same race hatred which he

THE TRUTH ABOUT SEDITION 91

himself possessed. He eventually ran from the United States when proceedings had been taken against him as an anarchist, and proceeded to Germany, but not until the conspiracy which he had engineered was perfected.

“ Hardial first lectured in San Francisco on atheism, but the result of his presence there was to inoculate his Indian hearers with seditious political ideas. There were numbers of Indian emigrants in California and Oregon, and the flame of sedition began to spread through these states. As I have already said, the ground had been prepared in Vancouver, and this and neighbouring places also proved fertile districts for Hardial’s propaganda.

“ During a visit to St. John, Oregon, in 1913, Hardial proposed to start a revolutionary paper which should be called the *Ghadr* (Mutiny). This plan met with approval and received moral and financial support in St. John, Wina, Bridal Veil, Linton, Portland, Astoria, and other places. There already existed in Oregon a local association which had cast its lot with Hardial, and a second revolutionary society known as the Hindi Association of the Pacific Coast was formed to further the idea of revolt in India.

“ It was decided to establish the *Ghadr* newspaper in San Francisco, and Hardial went to that city to organise the undertaking. The first issue of the paper was dated November 1, 1913. This

92 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

organ was violently anti-British, and preached murder and mutiny in every sentence. All Indians were urged to go home with the express purpose of committing murder, causing revolution, and expelling the British Government. These facts we know not only from reading copies of the paper which subsequently fell into our hands, but from evidence brought out at the trials here in India of the ring-leaders of the conspiracy.

"The work of distributing this paper in the various Indian dialects throughout India and among the Indians of America and the Strait Settlements was undertaken by the Hindi Association, which formed branches at Portland, Astoria, St. John, Sacramento, Stockton, Bridal Veil, and in various other places. The association also took further measures to prepare India for a revolution, these including an appeal to foreign nations for help.

"The holding of seditious meetings along with the propaganda of the *Ghadr* was decided upon, and these meetings were continuous up to the outbreak of the war. The first meeting of this nature was held in Sacramento in December, 1913. Portraits of famous seditionists and murderers were shown, and inflammatory mottoes were displayed. Hardial made a speech in May, 1914, in which he told his audience that Germany was getting ready for war with England, and

THE TRUTH ABOUT SEDITION 93

that it was time for the Indians in America to return home for a revolution. This utterance of Hardial is significant in that it indicates he knew Germany's plans some months before war was declared. We have no doubt of German connection with the conspiracy to cause a revolution in India, but it is circumstantial evidence of this kind upon which we must depend to establish the fact. Hardial when compelled to leave the United States left an organisation and agents behind him to carry on his revolutionary programme.

"Meetings of a similar nature followed at Berkeley, Stockton, Astoria, Alessandro, Fresno, Upland, Oxnard, Los Angeles, Claremont, Elton, Jersey, Portland, Seattle, Washington, Aberdeen, and other places. It was at meetings held at Elton and Jersey, California, early in July, 1914, that vows were taken to go to India to overthrow the existing Government. At a meeting at Oxnard near the end of July it was announced that the time for the rebellion had come.

"The prediction was made that Great Britain would have to join the war, and that revolutions would break out in Egypt, Ireland, South Africa, and elsewhere.

"Funds were collected at this time and plans were begun for the return. The leaders immediately started to beat up recruits in Oregon and California, and hurried them towards San

94 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

Francisco. On August 11 several thousand Indians from various sections appeared for a meeting in Sacramento, and at that time many of them agreed to return to India for revolt.

" You already know the story of the sailing of the *Komagatu Maru* from Vancouver in July, 1914, with the disappointed and embittered Indians who had been refused admission to Canada when they attempted to land for the purpose of settling there after their emigration from India. This was incidental to the main conspiracy, although the leader of the expedition, Gurdit Singh, who knew all along that Canada never would admit these people, appears to have planned the trip largely for the purpose of creating an incident which would inflame Indian opinion against the British and thus divert attention from his own frauds. Out of this ship load of men, most of whom were duped by Gurdit Singh by promises of securing them admission to Canada, several, when their hopes were not realised, did on their return join those who migrated to India for the purpose of revolt.

• " It is not necessary to detail the departure of the various bodies of revolutionists from Vancouver and San Francisco. All told about 5,000 or 6,000 were recruited on the Pacific Coast and at Shanghai and Hong Kong, and these men eventually reached India a considerable time after the war had begun. Some 200 of them,

THE TRUTH ABOUT SEDITION 95

whom we knew as seditionists from past experience, were detained on their arrival at port, or in the Punjab, but the majority of them, who were supposed to be peaceful subjects, were allowed to go their way and travelled to the Punjab, where, as it appeared later, the most violent at once proceeded to start the revolt. Their plans were, however, considerably disorganized by the fact that many of their leaders had been interned on arrival in India.

“The objects of the seditionists, as set forth by copies of the *Ghadr* and other evidence produced at the trials, were mainly these: the seduction of Indian troops and villagers, the massacre of loyal subjects and officials, the breaking of jails, the looting of treasuries, union with foreign enemies, the commission of dacoities, the procuring of arms, the foundation of secret societies, and the destruction of railways and telegraphs.”

Sir Michael referred to a report of the conspiracy trials and continued:

“Here are a few extracts from the revolutionists’ publications produced at the trials, which will indicate their frame of mind:

“‘Deal with the Europeans in such a way that they might remember it across the seas.’ ‘Fight for the country—kill the whites.’ ‘Be determined to expel the tyrants. Drink their blood to your heart’s content,’ and ‘Let us

start a rebellion. . . . The enemy is entangled in difficulties. . . . He is hemmed in by the German lion. Let us all go together.'

"A poem which was found in the pocket-book of one of the men brought to trial is also interesting, although rather gruesome. It runs as follows :

"' Kill or die. The government of these tyrants will not last any longer. The time of thy departure has come. Let us kill the white. Take the country even at the cost of your lives. Be ready for a rebellion. Kill the wicked and tyrannical European. It is very easy to kill him. Do not leave any trace of him. Do not leave him until you have taken his life. Extirpate the whole nation. Set fire to all the churches. Kill all the Europeans, men and women, show them no mercy. Kill them to a finish. Sacrifice them on the altar of the sword. Spare neither parents nor offspring. You should flay Europeans alive, so that they may remember it for ages to come. Without a rebellion our lives will always be unhappy. Make a rebellion hastily, you have not more than a year at your disposal. Kill the whites and fill the rivers with their corpses. We will go up to England shouting kill, kill.'

"The revolutionists gradually foregathered in small gangs and laid plans for the commission of robberies and other outrages, partly to terrorise

THE TRUTH ABOUT SEDITION 97

the loyal population, partly for the purpose of securing funds to finance the revolt. In November and December, 1914, various murders were committed and attempts were made to loot treasuries and arsenals, but through the watchfulness of the police and the co-operation of the people those revolutionary plans were frustrated, and late in December a large number of the gang leaders were rounded up and imprisoned.

"However, at the end of December matters once more began to assume a serious aspect. Certain revolutionists from Bengal came north and assumed direction of affairs, with the result that some sort of organisation was established out of the chaos. Emissaries were set to work collecting materials for bombs, a bomb factory was established at Jhabewal, and other steps were taken to further an outbreak.

"Towards the end of January dacoities were committed at various places. By the combined efforts of the people and the police numbers of the leaders were arrested from time to time, but the outrages continued. Headquarters for the rebels were established at Amritsar and Lahore; and it was decided that on February 21, 1915, a general rising should be attempted. Accordingly messengers were sent out to several cantonments to announce to the Indian troops the coming revolt. From the very beginning,

98 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

of course, attempts had been made to seduce troops by the distribution of literature and by personal contact, but in all but a few cases these attempts met with complete failure, and the army, like the civil population, remained steadfastly loyal.

“ In pursuance of their plans the revolutionists prepared bombs, collected arms, provided instruments for destroying railways and telegraphs, and drew up a declaration of war. One important thing they had overlooked, however, and that was the vigilance of the police and the hostility of the people towards the revolutionary movement. The rebels became suspicious finally, and antedated the time of the rising to February 19, but this too became known to the authorities, and when the leaders assembled in Lahore to start the conflagration they were surrounded in a bomb factory and arrested by the Government forces.

“ Thus the outbreak in Lahore never took place, and as the signal was not given in that city, the other proposed risings collapsed. This really was the end of the main revolutionary enterprise, although for many months murders and isolated outrages were committed by small bands of the returned emigrants who had not been apprehended. In this connection it is significant to note that the people of the Punjab, having, as has been pointed out, no

THE TRUTH ABOUT SEDITION 99

sympathy with the revolutionary plans and growing tired of the lawless acts, in many cases gave information against the rebels and assisted the authorities in their arrest. As a result, while there undoubtedly are numbers of the original conspirators living in the Punjab, the lawlessness has been suppressed; and this exotic movement, foreign to the ideas and traditions of a people who pride themselves on their loyalty, has died for want of the sympathy and support the misguided leaders had counted upon.

"The men who were arrested were dealt with in two trials. In the first trial fifty-seven accused, chiefly returned emigrants, were convicted, and of these fifty-one were found guilty of offences punishable by death. The tribunal, however, discriminated between the degrees of guilt and passed the death sentence on only twenty-four and the alternative sentence of transportation for life on the remainder. Seventeen of those condemned to death had their sentences commuted to life transportation, so that only seven were executed. In the second trial fifty-nine men were convicted, but only five of these actually suffered the death penalty. Besides those who were punished through the courts, some half-dozen met their death in conflict with the police and the people.

"Plotting among the revolutionary section of the Indians in America undoubtedly continues,

but we are keeping a close watch on them, not that we fear a serious outbreak, but because we wish to protect the people of India from the murders and robberies practised by those conspirators who returned at the outbreak of the war. I understand that the attention of the United States Government has been called to the matter.

"In conclusion I might add this pertinent fact: out of the 190,000 Indian troops recruited for the British army since the war began (this statement was made in September, 1916), the Punjab, though its population is only one-twelfth that of the Indian Empire, has furnished 50 per cent., and of these no less than one-third are Sikhs, though they form only one-tenth of the population of the Punjab. Thus the misdeeds of a few thousands of the community, so far from affecting the traditional loyalty of the Sikhs, have only stimulated the Sikh nation to greater service and greater sacrifices in the cause of the Empire to which they are proud to belong."

Since Sir Michael related these facts still more of the conspirators have been arrested and punished. The United States, too, has instituted strong measures to suppress the plotters in that country.

The question of the border tribesmen in the north is quite another matter. These are by

THE TRUTH ABOUT SEDITION 101

nature a warlike folk, and fighting is their main business in life. They have always given the British trouble, and it will be many a long year before they cease their hostile activities. Conflicts between these people and Government troops have ceased to cause surprise in India; and they produce little anxiety, for the tribesmen are kept well in hand by ample Government forces stationed along the border.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LOYALTY OF THE INDIAN PRINCES

THERE is another important side to the question of loyalty in India, and that is the attitude of the Indian Princes toward the British Government.

As regards this point, I can do no better than repeat the striking declaration which was made to me by His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, one of the greatest of the ruling Princes, during a conversation at the Palace in Bikaner in December, 1916. We were discussing the statements, published at various times after the outbreak of the war, to the effect that the Princes were lukewarm in their devotion to the British Flag.

“The charges that the ruling Princes of India are loyal to the King-Emperor solely because of self-interest, and that they are ready to break away from the British Government at any moment when they believe they can enlarge their own powers by so doing, are either wicked and malicious falsehoods,” said His Highness

emphatically, "or are the product of people who do not know whereof they speak. Native India is unqualifiedly loyal to the core."

The Maharaja spoke feelingly on the subject throughout our long talk, and at one point declared in a voice vibrating with emotion :

"I love the King-Emperor as the representative of sovereign power, and I love him as a man. There is no sacrifice which he might ask of me that I would not make. My resources, my life, and the lives of the men of Bikaner belong to him. That is how I feel personally toward the throne, and I speak with the authority arising from close associations with my brother rulers when I tell you that they too love their King-Emperor and will follow where he leads, through thick and thin."

Highly cultured, his education embracing the learning both of the East and of the West, the Maharaja is credited with being one of the most progressive and able rulers of the Indian Empire. It is stated that for a long time, although he is now only thirty-six years of age, his views have been sought on delicate questions by the Government of India. During the important conference of Princes in Delhi, which I have already mentioned, he played a leading part, and at the conclusion was accorded the distinction of a vote of thanks for his services by the other rulers. More recently a striking

tribute was paid to his ability when he was appointed as a representative of India to take part in the Imperial War Conference held in London.

Those who know the Maharaja best say that if he feels keenly on the subject of loyalty, the reason lies in his personality and in his intimate knowledge of the attitude of the other Indian rulers. At the outbreak of the European war he was the first of the ruling Princes of India to offer the services of himself and his troops, and to place the entire resources of his state at the disposal of King George, his message being sent even before Great Britain had formally entered the conflict. And in fairness to the other rulers it must be recorded, as His Highness himself pointed out, that their offers of support followed his in quick succession. His emphatic pronouncement at the very outset had a great effect in forming public opinion in India and giving it a right direction from the start.

Shortly after Great Britain took up arms the Maharaja sailed for France, leaving behind a broken-hearted Prince of twelve, his heir, who had pleaded as only a lad can plead that he too be allowed to go and fight for the King-Emperor. His Highness was appointed to the headquarters staff of the Meerut Division of the Indian expeditionary force, and fought through the most

critical stages of those early days. Meanwhile other Princes of India were also fighting personally in various fields of operation.

After a few months the Maharaja of Bikaner was made an aide-de-camp on the staff of Field-Marshal Sir John French, and was officially commended by the Commander-in-Chief for gallant conduct in the field. The Maharaja returned to India in February, 1915, owing to the fatal illness of his daughter, and reached Egypt on his way home just in time to place himself at the head of his famous regiment, the Bikaner Camel Corps, which was stationed there, and to help to repel the Turkish invasion. Again he was mentioned for gallantry, in despatches from the Commander-in-Chief, Sir John Maxwell.

His Highness comes from the famous fighting race of Rathore Rajputs, and points out with pride that the seal of the neighbouring state of Jodhpur, from which his ancestors came, still bears the words "Ran Banka Rathore," which means: "Rathore, valiant in Battle." When only twenty years of age he commanded a Bikaner regiment in the British expeditionary force in China in 1900-1, and thus, with his services in Egypt and France, has the distinction of having fought on three continents for his Sovereign. In addition he served for eight years as aide-de-camp to the Prince of Wales —now King George

—and when the Prince ascended the throne was made aide to His Majesty.

In the fall of 1915 the Maharaja wished to return to the front, but he was in poor health, due to his having proceeded to the war too soon after a serious illness, and his physicians would not permit him to face another winter campaign in Europe. Again in 1916 he offered his services—his troops were still fighting for the colours—but the Viceroy of India felt that the Maharaja's services would be more usefully employed in India. So he remained in Bikaner, but continued making large contributions to the war fund and furnishing troops and camel corps for active service.

Once, after the beginning of the war, the Maharaja was singled out for assassination by a small party of seditionists in British India who felt, as was brought out at the Benares Conspiracy Trial, that he was a menace to their plans for causing an anti-British uprising. The plot was discovered quickly and promptly quashed.

During our conversation the Maharaja referred in glowing terms to the other rulers who had given their personal services during the war, and to the great contributions of money and men which had come from the various Indian states. His Highness enumerated the services of several of the other Princes, and spoke proudly

of the fact that among those who had taken the field in person for their Emperor were no less than six of his own, the Rathore, clan : the Maharajas of Jodhpur, Kishengarh, Rutlam, and Idar, Sir Pratap Singh, regent of Jodhpur during the minority of the heir, and himself. Concerning his own part he had little to say, passing over this subject with characteristic reserve and dignity.. In discussing whether all this assistance had been given selfishly, His Highness said :

“ When the war broke out there was a rush among the ruling Princes of India to assure the King-Emperor of their loyalty and to tender all the resources at their command. Those who charge us with acting selfishly seem to ignore, or overlook, the fact that these offers were made during the dark days when the Germans were sweeping everything before them. It was not outside the range of possibility that the Central Allies might accomplish their object of overrunning Europe. But did this deter India from standing by the Flag ?

“ A little later India was virtually denuded of regular British troops, which were needed to stem the onward rush of the Germans. The existence of the Indian Empire depended on the loyalty of Princes and people. It was the opportunity of generations for a successful uprising, had such a revolt been in the minds of

the people of India, for there was nothing to prevent it. But British India and the ruling Princes and the people of Native India stood by their King-Emperor throughout that trying period. Was that selfish loyalty, or was it the loyalty born of real devotion to the throne ?

“Take the case of my relation, the young Maharaja of Jodhpur. When the war broke out His Highness was only sixteen years old, and since he was not of age the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, had not selected him for active service. But the Maharaja wrote a personal and voluntary letter to the Viceroy, beseeching His Excellency to let him go to France, and spiritedly adding : ‘I have two younger brothers, so what does it matter if I am killed.’ The earnestness of His Highness prevailed, and he got his way. Was this selfish or true loyalty ? If this does not demonstrate our deep and inborn loyalty to the King-Emperor, I don’t know what does.

“To go back a little, was it selfishness or loyalty that drew my ancestor and many other Princes in person to the battlefields to fight for the British Government during the great Mutiny ; that led to the widespread offers from the Native States of assistance in the time of the Panjdeh scare (in 1885), when it seemed in India that war with Russia was inevitable ; that has caused the ruling Princes for years to maintain within their states and at their own expense bodies

of highly-trained troops for the defence of the Empire ; that sent numerous Princes to risk their lives on the Indian frontier in 1897 ; that brought out huge contributions of money and troops from the rulers during the trouble in ~~China~~ in 1900 ; was it selfishness or loyalty, I ask, that dictated all these things which it was not necessary for us to do in order to maintain our standing in the Empire ?

"I do not mean to say, of course, that Indian rulers are different from any other men in that they are never actuated by selfish motives. Selfishness is a characteristic of the human race, but our selfishness does not touch our devotion to the King-Emperor. We are absolute loyalists, and our people are loyalists with us.

"And the same can be said of British India. Apart from our religious precepts and traditions, which have imbued India with the spirit of loyalty, His Majesty the Emperor, having twice visited India, is personally known to the people and is extremely popular throughout the length and breadth of India as a great, just, and sympathetic Sovereign, and we are therefore drawn to him no less by personal magnetism."

His Highness pulled a document from the files on his desk and handed it to the correspondent. It was a copy of the oath of allegiance to the Maharaja, that must be taken by every member of the Representative Assembly which he has

110 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

established for his state. Incorporated in this oath are these words : “ . . . And that through our ruler I will be loyal and faithful and bear true allegiance to His Imperial Majesty the King, Emperor of India, and His Majesty’s rightful heirs and successors of the Royal and Imperial House of England.”

“ Does that mean anything to the outside world ? ” queried His Highness with a smile.

Only a few hours previous to this conversation I had driven through the city with the Maharaja. On the way the carriage passed a humble dwelling which was gaily decorated, the most striking part of the display being an arch over the door which bore the words, “ God Save the King.” The attention of the Maharaja was called to this.

“ That house undoubtedly is decorated for a wedding,” he remarked, adding with a laugh : “ It’s a striking example of the disloyalty of the people of Bikaner to their King-Emperor, isn’t it ? ”

But to return to the interview at the Palace. His Highness took back from me the document containing the Assembly oath and sat fingering it reflectively for a time before he continued.

“ It would be foolish to claim that the ruling Princes never have had their differences with representatives of the Government of India. There have been times in the past when we

have felt the sting of pin-pricks inflicted by some official. I love the King-Emperor; but, frankly, there have been times when I have not loved the acts of some of his servants. There has been a disposition on the part of some to belittle the importance of the ruling Princes and to trespass on their dignity, thinking thereby to enhance the importance of the trespasser, and forgetting that the greater the rulers of India the greater the British Empire as a whole. Naturally, it is not pleasing to a ruler, whose ancestors have held the throne in their own right for centuries before the British came to India, to be subjected to petty annoyances by some minor official.

"But we have also many true and sympathetic friends among the British political officers, and things have improved and are improving fast. Fortunately, our annoyances have been caused by individual officials, and we are gratefully alive to the fact that the policy of the Government of India towards the Indian states has been one of sympathy, and that there has been displayed a sincere desire to eliminate all uncalled-for interferences in our internal affairs. I have seen this bond of sympathy growing under the four Viceroys who have served during my active rule—Lords Curzon, Minto, Hardinge, and Chelmsford—and I know that this attitude of the Government of India has certainly drawn

the Indian states closer to itself, and has stimulated the feeling among the rulers of real devotion to the King-Emperor and to his Royal House.

"The party of seditionists and anarchists in India is small, but had the British Government not followed the just and sympathetic ~~policy~~—the only right policy for the British Government—that was followed during the viceroyalties of Lord Minto and Lord Hardinge, the ranks of the party against order and good government would undoubtedly have been considerably swelled in spite of the criticisms of the short-sighted advocates of a certain school who can find nothing good in these two great Viceroys' policies.

"So long as the handling of affairs between the British Government and the Indian states remains in the hands of such capable political officers and such sympathetic friends as Mr. J. B. Wood, the Political Secretary, and Colonel C. J. Windham, the British Resident at present accredited to our courts, the future is full of hope.

"Far from wanting to sever relations with the British Government, the ruling Princes desire to remain a part of the Empire, for there is no government so great or so good as His Majesty's. We want to stay and help in the achievement of even greater things than have been accomplished in the past.

" We hope, of course, that before long the rulers will be given seats in an assembly, such as a Council of Princes, which shall have a voice in the Government of India in matters relating to our states, our people, and ourselves. We look forward also to the time when the people of British India shall have prepared themselves to take a greater hand in the affairs of State. I feel sure that these things are coming, for the signs all point that way. There is every indication that the Government of India has no greater desire than to see the Princes and the people stand on their own feet, under the guidance of England.

" I realise that political progress in India must be comparatively slow to be healthy ; I believe that the Government of India will do all it can to meet the aspirations for advancement, and we ruling Princes ask nothing better than to be allowed to work hand-in-hand with the Supreme Government towards our goal.

" Loyalty ? Call it selfishness, or devotion, or what you will, we of the ruling houses of India have followed and will follow the British Flag through adversity and through triumph to the end. The men of Bikaner, and the men of other states, are risking their lives, many of them dying gladly on the battlefield for their beloved King-Emperor. What better answer to the charges of disloyalty can be found ? "

To this statement by the Maharaja of Bikaner I might add similar declarations of unswerving loyalty from other Princes, but I should like to give here a concrete example of the attitude of the Indian rulers towards the British Government. I refer again to the so-called Princes' Conference held in Delhi in November, 1916, at the invitation of the Viceroy, to consider questions of general importance to their states and people and to render advice requested by the British Government on certain matters.

Great weight was attached to the fact that two-score Princes and Chiefs, rulers over great territories and representing untold wealth and influence, should have come together at the invitation of His Majesty's representative at this crucial time in the history of the world war. Their mere presence in the capital city was interpreted as a tribute of loyalty to England, and in addition to this an unqualified statement of adherence to the throne was made in the name of the conference by His Highness the Gaekwar of Baroda, during his answer to the closing speech of the Viceroy. In concluding his address the Maharaja turned towards His Excellency and said :

“ Further, we desire, with sincere emphasis, that Your Excellency will convey to His Most Gracious Majesty, the King-Emperor, warm

assurances of our unswerving loyalty to his august person and to the throne."

Among those who attended this conference were the Gaekwar of Baroda, above mentioned, ruler over more than 2,000,000 people, who up to that time, besides offering his troops and all the resources of his state to the King-Emperor for war service, had given some £32,000 for aeroplanes, and was contributing in other ways towards the expenses of the war; the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior, who had sent two regiments of infantry on service, and whose contributions in money and material had aggregated hundreds of thousands of pounds; the Maharaja of Kolhapur, direct descendant of Sivaji, the great Mahratta leader; the Maharaja of Jaipur, one of the old-fashioned Rajput Princes, whose loyalty and generosity are household words; the Maharaja of Bikaner, whose services to the Empire are described earlier in this chapter; the Rao of Cutch, who from his lonely island on the western coast was sending £36,000 a year toward the expenses of the war; the Maharajas of Kashmir, Indore, Patiala, Alwar, and Kapurthala, the Nawab of Maler Kotla and the Raja of Sirmur, whose imperial service troops were fighting in the various theatres of war; the Begum of Bhopal, the woman ruler, who is likened to Queen Victoria in that she has devoted her life to the service of her people.

116 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

and of the Empire ; the Māharajas of Jodhpur, Kishengarh, and Idar ; the Jam of Nawanagar and the Rana of Barwani, who served for some time in the field in France ; and others, such as the Chiefs of Kotah, Dhar, Datia, and Benares, who had rendered notable assistance to England in the war.

CHAPTER IX *

GERMAN PLANS THAT FAILED

THE loyalty of the Princes and of the people of India to the King-Emperor, upon which so much of the future of that country depends, was tried by fire after the outbreak of the war. For Germany, believing that the Indians as a whole were ready to sever their connection with Great Britain, left no stone unturned to bring about a revolt, according to both English and Indian authorities. In this, as in numerous similar instances, the Teutons badly misjudged the situation. Just how they were led into the error remains a matter of speculation.

Apropos of this subject I had an interesting conversation in Simla, in October, 1916, with Sir Charles Cleveland, Director of Criminal Intelligence for India. Sir Charles characterised the German plots as “clumsy, belated, too theoretical, and based on a misunderstanding of Indian character,” and declared that the schemes failed chiefly because of the sanity of the great Indian public which withheld its support.

Sir Charles Cleveland is reputed to know more about those in whom the Secret Service naturally would be interested than any other man in India. For years he has made a study of that class which favours the darkness of night for its comings and goings, and the Government relies upon him, as head of the Secret Service, to check untoward occurrences in any section before they have grown into a serious menace.

"There has been some trouble in India," said Sir Charles, "but it has fallen very far short both of the picture drawn in enemy publications and of the enemy's desire. The state of India all through the war seems to have exposed a very big miscalculation on the part of the Germans.

"It would be interesting to examine how far this miscalculation was due to a misunderstanding of normal Indian affairs, and how far to a mis-carriage of plans for causing trouble in India and among the Indians outside India during the war. My own impression is that Germany thought India would need very little extraneous prompting and assistance to rise against the British if the latter were in serious embarrassment owing to a big continental war, and that therefore not very much attention was paid by the German Government to instigation in India before the war.

"Where and how did the German Government

get that idea? Was it conveyed to them by secret unknown agents or by their consular officers in India or by some over-confident Indian Extremist or by British panic mongers? It is difficult to say for certain, but I remember that some years ago an Indian Extremist leader used the following words to me:

“ ‘ We shall certainly try to embarrass you in India if you have a war with a continental power or with Afghanistan. Our feelings are firm on that point unless, indeed, self-interest or some special reason dictates a passive attitude to some or all of us. But never again will you find such positive assistance as we gave you at the time of the Boer War.’ ”

“ My Extremist friend went on to tell me that we were foolish to think we could count on the Indian army. At the time I thought my friend’s attitude was pathetic in its self-delusion, and time has shown that I was right.

“ After the war broke out, the German Government showed a willingness to spend money lavishly on Indian trouble, but there was no sign of ‘ financing ’ of troublesome schemes or individuals before the war. In 1913 and 1914 a German viewing the situation in India with patriotic anti-British eyes would have observed the following phenomena :

“ A rapprochement between a section of Indian Mohammedans and the Young-Turk

party in Europe; an anarchical revolutionary movement in Bengal with some ramifications in the north of India; a latent movement of extreme nationalism in the Bombay Presidency and some other places; an unrestrained *Ghadr* movement among Indians in the United States and Canada, and a certain amount of Moslem dissatisfaction in the north of India and along the North-West Frontier.

"I think it was beyond the power of any German to decide whether these phenomena were the signs of a deep and widespread unrest or merely local surface disturbances, and I feel sure that in order to interpret them the Germans consulted exiled and partisan Indians who were out of touch with India as a whole and who therefore magnified their own views and feelings and those of their friends and associates out of all reasonable proportion.

"For the first few months of the war the Germans waited for the Indian storm to come of itself, as they had been led to believe that it would come. To begin with, our enemies based extravagant hopes on Turkey's intervention, but the Indian Mohammedans as a whole took this with extraordinary calm and resignation. Then came the *Ghadr* invasion from the United States, Canada, and the Far East, but that broke itself hopelessly on the good sense and feeling of the Punjab public and on

the resourceful administration of that province.

"Disappointed by these failures of the Indian trouble to arrive automatically, the Germans realised that they must attempt direct assistance, and turned their attention to the Bengal revolutionary party. After six months or so of the war the Germans had established a regular bureau of disaffected Indians in Germany itself, among whom were included some leading members of most of the disturbing movements already mentioned. Under their advice grandiose schemes were evolved for the supply of arms, ammunition, money, and even German soldiers and sailors to the revolutionaries in Bengal and to the disaffected Moslem fanatics in the north of India.

"The schemes all miscarried hopelessly; remittances had a way of getting intercepted by the wrong people; ships on secret German errands kept knocking up against the Allied warships, and last, but perhaps not least, most of the moves in the plots were promptly reported to us by our own agents. These plots are still continuing, but there is little sting in them, and I am afraid the Germans themselves do not believe in them very strongly.

"I should like to be able to say that the frustration of the plots has been due to the Indian police and to the branch of that service under me, but I gladly admit that it has been

chiefly due to the sanity of the great Indian public which has withheld its support. Plots and conspiracies are very severely handicapped when the public environment is apathetic or hostile to the conspirator. At the moment we of the Secret Service are feeling very comfortable, but professionally we are disappointed with the German plots for India. We had hoped to learn a great deal from their system and methods, but they seem to us to have been clumsy, belated, too theoretical, and based on a misunderstanding of Indian character. At the same time I believe the British Empire owes a great debt to the Indian police in all its branches for its unswerving loyalty and zeal during the great war."

Not long after my talk with Sir Charles Cleveland I had an opportunity to discuss this same subject with His Highness the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior, one of the most powerful of the Indian Princes, in his capital. Here is what he had to say :

"I believe that the war will continue for eighteen months longer" (this was in January, 1917), "and I hope, for my part, that it will go on until Germany has been crushed. And I am sure that all India feels as I do about this matter, quite the reverse of the attitude Germany expected from us at the outbreak of hostilities.

"Germany firmly believed that India would

join the Central Allies. Just what led the Teutons into this error I cannot say, but they certainly misjudged the situation here badly. There never was a chance that India would turn against Great Britain. I don't mean to say that there is no sedition in India. There is, just as there is sedition to some degree in America or in any other country, but those who are plotting against the Government are negligible in number, and they are no more representative of India as a whole than were the New York bomb-throwers three or four years ago representative of the American public.

"But Germany thought, for some reason or other, that we were ready to sever relations with Great Britain and banked on our support in the struggle. Long before the war began, Germany was busy trying to stir up sedition in India. I cannot prove this statement to you at this time, but I know it to be true. The attempts failed, and to-day Hindustan is standing loyally with the rest of the British Empire, and will continue so to stand until the last gun is fired.

"In ordinary times we Princes grouse and grumble among ourselves a good deal—and sometimes, I think, we have had reason for it—but when the big crisis came it found us all rushing to tender our support to the King-Emperor. That is only natural. Even the pots and kettles in the kitchen jostle and bump one

another about angrily between meals, but when the master's dinner is being prepared they are bubbling away merrily in harmony, doing their best. That's the way it is with us here in India, and I don't know that we are so much different from the rest of the world."

It may be added that the Maharaja Scindia has furnished very tangible evidence of the sincerity of his words. His Highness is a major-general in the British army, and gave his personal services with the British expeditionary force to China in 1901. During the present war affairs of State, or, more properly, affairs bearing directly on imperial interests, have precluded his leaving Gwalior, but from the beginning he has been making great contributions to the British arms. His troops have been in France, and at the time of this interview were fighting in East Africa and Egypt and were helping to guard the Indian Frontier from Quetta and Bannu.

Just how much he has given he himself will not know until the war is over and the final accounts are in, but up to January, 1917, he had expended somewhere in the neighbourhood of £300,000 outside the upkeep of the hospital ship *Loyalty*. To the great contribution called for in the purchase and maintenance of this ship he modestly called himself only a subscriber, but as a matter of fact during the two years and more the ship had been in commission he

had financed it himself and spent on it nearly £300,000. He was also expending £1,000 a month for the up-keep of a convalescent home for officers and soldiers which he established at Nairobi, Africa, at the beginning of the war.

CHAPTER X

“ HOME-RULE ”

POLITICAL matters having taken on an added importance in India of late, naturally the subject of ultimate “home-rule” for British India occupies a large place in the thoughts of the Indian politician, a few of the so-called ultra-radicals even advocating the immediate granting of some form of self-government.

The questions of what the British Government ought to do and intends to do as regards the bestowing of further political powers on the Indian, and of how much immediate advance he is capable of making, are being generally and eagerly discussed. One finds a wide divergence of opinion in this respect between the Indian extremist, on the one hand, and the British extremist on the other, but the bulk of the thinking people of India appear to be largely agreed on the fundamental points.

During my tour of India I discussed the problem of self-government with many prominent Europeans and Indians. Some extremely radical

views were encountered, of course, but the majority of the moderates who expressed an opinion met on certain common grounds which are well summarised in a statement that was made to me by the Reverend Dr. J. C. R. Ewing, the well-known American educator, who has spent much of his life in India, and who for the past seven years has occupied the important post of Vice-Chancellor, or President, of the University of the Punjab. Dr. Ewing is the only American who has ever been accorded so high an honour in India as was bestowed upon him when he was made head of this university to direct the activities of twenty-seven affiliated colleges in the province, with their student population of some 12,000. As a mark of appreciation for his services to India he was decorated by the King in 1914, being created Companion of the Indian Empire. He has made a deep study of political questions in India, and not infrequently has been consulted by Government officials on delicate matters of policy.

Dr. Ewing expressed the belief that home-rule for India was inevitable, but declared that the country was not prepared for it at the moment and would not be ready for this important step for many years to come.

“ When the British Government at the time of Lord Macaulay introduced Western education into India it opened the door for self-govern-

ment," said the Doctor. " Such a step, involving the teaching of democratic ideals, could have no other result. It was the crossing of the Rubicon, and there is no turning back. To do the British Government justice, I believe that they made this move with the full knowledge of what the outcome must be, and that they have always had in mind the ultimate granting of home-rule to the people of Hindustan.

" There are, of course, various shades of opinion amongst both Europeans and Indians as to the speed with which the home-rule goal should be approached. It is my personal belief that India is not ready now for self-government. Occasionally one hears some Indian preaching the doctrine of immediate home-rule, but such views are advanced only by the radicals, who, I fear, often play politics with this subject to further their own ends. However, while India is not yet ready for self-government, I believe that the time has come when the Government must inaugurate measures which will call for the employment of an ever-increasing number of Indians in the conduct of national affairs.

" The great bulk of the people of India are illiterate, something like 94 per cent., according to the latest statistics, but among the other 6 per cent. there are many highly-educated and brilliant men who could be called upon to play their part in government. The only way that India

will learn to govern is by governing. The only way she will learn to avoid mistakes is by making them. Home-rule can never become an accomplished fact until a trained body of Indians has been raised up. And in order to achieve this, one of the most important steps will be the opening up of the Civil Service to a still greater extent to the educated Indian. Not only must this be done, but Indian and British Government employees must be placed on the same footing, and must learn to work in close co-operation. There can be no line of racial demarcation so far as Government service is concerned.

“ How long it will be before this country is prepared for some form of self-government is a matter of pure speculation. Certainly many years, probably many generations, must elapse. Foreigners in considering this question often make the mistake of looking upon India as a nation. As a matter of fact, Hindustan represents many races and many languages, and in the process of unification there are as many difficulties to be overcome as there would be, for instance, in an attempt to bring all the various countries of North and South America under one supreme government.

“ Moreover, the average Indian of the so-called illiterate class knows nothing of politics and takes no interest in problems of government. He is mainly concerned with his own little personal

question of religion at the moment is a most important one, yet I do not feel that it is a permanent barrier in the way of political progress for India.

"There is still another point which cannot be ignored in the consideration of home-rule for India. Due partly to the form of government under which the people were ruled prior to the British occupation, and partly to an Oriental characteristic, the average Indian has never developed the initiative and administrative qualities which are so necessary to the successful conduct of the affairs of State. He has always been used to dictation, and has yet to learn to dictate for himself. In subordinate positions the Indian often displays the marks of genius; but frequently it proves to be the case that when some brilliant subordinate is placed in complete control he fails to make good. Please note that I have not applied this statement to all Indians, but only to the average native of this country.

"This characteristic lack of administrative ability is something which will be eradicated to a large extent in time. As I said before, the only way to learn to govern is to govern, and the only way the Indian will acquire initiative is by a gradual training in positions of responsibility. I do not think that the Orient will ever acquire the same type of initiative as exists in the West. I will go further and say that it will

be very many years before any form of self-government which may be established in India will approach the efficiency of the government maintained by the British. In my mind a form of home-rule under which the British Government should still retain the power of appointing certain supervising officials would perhaps be the best for India, but, of course, that would not meet the aspirations of the people.

“ However, despite all the drawbacks to home rule that I have mentioned, I have great faith in the capacity of India to govern itself ultimately and to do it well. The Indians are a wonderful people, and while they lack certain characteristics which we of the West consider important, in some other features they have shown themselves to be our superiors. The history of ancient India is replete with marks of the highest order of civilisation. Hindustan to-day stands at the open gateway leading out on to the highway of progress. The people of this vast Empire are rousing in a remarkable manner from the lethargy into which they had sunk. And from this awakening will come a reconstruction of the glories of the past, and newer and greater things.

“ I cannot, of course, set myself up as a spokesman for the Government of India, but I have talked with many officials on the question of home-rule, and I may say that in general I have

gathered the impression that the British Government intends to do all that may seem possible to facilitate the entrance of Indians who are qualified to higher positions in the Government service."

Dr. Ewing was asked what, in his opinion, would result if the British Government should suddenly decide to grant immediate and absolute self-government to India and should withdraw the army and all British officials. The Doctor replied with emphasis :

"There is absolutely no question as to what would happen. There would be chaos within two weeks. There would be wars between the various races, each of which would try to establish itself as the dominant power. The country would be split into a thousand parts, and there would be a reign of terror and bloodshed which is awful to contemplate. That is what would occur if India were left to its own resources tomorrow."

Dr. Ewing dropped the subject abruptly and turned to another point.

"While we are discussing the question of British rule in India," he said, "I should like to take this opportunity of refuting certain false statements which are being made in some of the newspapers of the United States. I have read many articles recently which have depicted the British Government as carrying on a rule of

oppression. It is charged that the Indian taxpayer is being crushed by the burdens imposed upon him and that the people are being harshly governed as a conquered race. A short time ago I was asked by an American friend to write a series of articles telling the truth about these matters. I have not had time to write the articles as yet, and I am very glad to have this opportunity of saying some of the things which I would have written.

“ I am an American. I am a friend of the British and I am a friend of the Indian. I have always tried to maintain an unbiassed attitude in the consideration of all questions pertaining to the two races, and I hope and believe that I have succeeded. And so when I tell you that the stories of oppression which are being published in America are false I speak from an impartial standpoint.

“ The British Government in India undoubtedly has its faults, but I know of no government in the world which is perfect, not even our beloved American Government. I believe, however, that British rule in India has been a good thing. I believe that, on the whole, affairs have been conducted unselfishly and with the idea of doing everything possible for the advancement of India. Neither in taxation nor in any other way is the British Government oppressing the people of India. As a matter of fact, India

136 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

is the lightest taxed nation in the world to-day, and the administration of equal justice for all has been one of the features which always has marked British rule here, at least so far as I have observed in my long study of this country.”

CHAPTER XI

• THE PRINCES, TOO, HAVE HOPES

ANOTHER element recently has entered into the discussion of the future government of India. The Indian rulers are beginning to express the hope that some sort of council or assembly of Princes may be formed which shall have a direct voice in the Imperial Government of India—not that they desire to trespass on any of the privileges which might accrue to British India if home-rule were granted, but that they wish to be in a position to express an official opinion on matters which relate to the states collectively, or to the welfare of the country as a whole.

The history-making conference of Princes at Delhi in 1916 developed more or less quiet discussion along this line. The very nature of the conference furnished a basis for considerable speculation concerning the possibilities of the extension of the privileges of the Princes. As I have already pointed out, this meeting was held at the invitation of the Viceroy, not only to

consider questions of general importance to the various states and their people, but to afford advice requested by the British Government on certain matters. Thus a notable precedent was established, for, while two very small conferences had been held previously for the discussion of problems relating to the higher colleges for the education of the sons of rulers, never before had general subjects come up for debate.

Both Princes and British officials attached great significance to this conference, it being held that it possessed elements which might have a vital bearing on the future of the Indian Empire. Stress was laid on the fact that the congress, which undoubtedly will become a fixed annual event, gave promise of an extensive co-operation between the Indian states. It was felt that this meeting was an important step towards the further unification of the various sections of the Empire, and with this thought naturally came the query as to whether the annual conferences might develop into a council which should have a hand in the government of India. Just a hint of this was contained in the address of welcome delivered by the Viceroy at the opening of the sessions.

"It may be," said Lord Chelmsford, "that in time to come a constitutional assemblage may grow out of these conferences which will take its place in the government of this great empire,

but for the moment I would say to you to content yourselves with the prosaic but useful task of advising the Government of India on certain specific matters."

While I was in Gwalior, during a conversation with His Highness the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior, who had taken a leading part in the Delhi conference, I asked for his views on the subject.

"We hope that a council of Princes or a House of Lords of some sort may be the outcome of these conferences," he said. "As a body perhaps we are not ready for such an organisation just yet, but the various bigger states are making great strides in matters of administration. I think that in a few years it should be possible to constitute an assembly of Princes who may have a hand in the adjustment of relations all round. And we Princes also look forward to the time when British India shall have a similar assembly under proper safeguards. We want to work with them and with the Government for the common good. The only thing we can do now is to sit on one side and offer suggestions, but such a rôle doesn't get us very far, does it?"

This was all His Highness had to say bearing directly on the question of an Assembly of Princes, but in the course of the interview he touched on several points which have such a vital relation to the subject that the views expressed,

coming as they did from one of the greatest of the Indian rulers, are worth repeating here.

"This war has done India a great deal of good," said His Highness. "By furnishing a common platform for us to work upon, it has drawn the Princes closer together, and, I hope, the Government of India to them. Mind you, there never was any question of disloyalty among the Princes, but they had not been given a chance like this before to show their devotion to the King."

"I must confess that, for various reasons, there was not the co-operation between the various states that there should have been. We worked along our own individual lines mostly. But the great common cause has changed all this and I hope for good. The recent conference of Princes in Delhi was an evidence of this change."

"The past months of war have done more to strengthen the feeling of sympathy between the states and the Government of India than anything else could have done. And sympathy on both sides is what India needs. There have been complaints that certain minor British officials have been inclined to trespass on our rights and dignities. (I am speaking now for Indians generally and their self-respect as human beings, not only for the Indian Princes.) Some of them have, to be sure, but such officials are the little fellows—small in calibre I mean—and I am glad to say that they have never represented the attitude

THE PRINCES, TOO, HAVE HOPES 141

of the Government. They are the exceptions, not the rule. They are the irresponsible.

"The pompous little chap who tries by bullying someone to raise himself to a higher level does not perhaps seriously hurt the person he is making uncomfortable, but he does hurt himself and, indirectly, the Government which he ought to be serving more intelligently. For Government does not approve such actions or condone them either when brought to notice: they are the actions of the men who are a law to themselves and disregard the precepts both of the Government and of their Sovereign, the King-Emperor of India. In a word, if they only knew it they are really 'un-English.' And yet even they cannot destroy the loyalty and devotion of the people committed by God and the Government to their care."

At this point I raised a question which I had asked Dr. Ewing and others before, when discussing the matter of an extension of governmental power to the people and the Princes of India.

"What would happen in India, Your Highness, if the British Government suddenly should decide to grant absolute self-rule to British India, should constitute the Princes absolute sovereigns, and should withdraw entirely from the country?"

"Who would be King?" countered the Maharaja quizzically.

142 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

"By that Your Highness means that there must be a supreme head?"

"Exactly. If you should take away our British Sovereign someone else would have to rule. Who would it be? That is hard to say, but it would be a case of the survival of the fittest. I will be frank in answering your question. If the British were to withdraw from India altogether, the country would be plunged into chaos.

"But of course the British Government will not withdraw, and no one, excepting perhaps a handful of hair-brained agitators, wishes it to withdraw. We want the British Government to stay, for it is the greatest and best Government in the world. We have a true devotion for our King-Emperor and for his Government, and all we ask is that we may be allowed to remain a part of the Empire and do our share."

CHAPTER XII

PROGRESS IN THE INDIAN STATES

ONE of the most hopeful signs in India is the growing tendency on the part of the Indian Princes to draw the curtain on the dark and primitive days of the past and to establish in their states a new regime which shall represent a combination of the best of the ideals of the West and of the East. A number of the more progressive of the Princes have for a long time been remodelling the affairs of their states on a modern basis, and many of the remainder of the rulers are beginning to fall in line and emulate the example of their more advanced brothers.

It seems almost unfair to select any one state as an example of progress, but since it is impossible in the space at my command to describe what is being done in all of them, I will confine myself to Bikaner, where I spent considerable time. It is not my purpose to give a history of what has been accomplished in this important state, but rather, if I am able, to present a brief sketch which shall leave in the mind of the

to make a trip through the capital, but there were the throngs just the same, as keen to get a glimpse as though he were a foreign Prince. And as the carriage advanced the people broke into such cheering as I had seldom heard before. Even tiny children took up the cry of "Khama," a salutation of respect and devotion peculiar to these parts and used only for the ruler, and the volume swelled until it became almost deafening. More than one of the aged people gave the Maharaja their blessings, and invoked any troubles which he might have to come upon themselves.

All the way this wonderful demonstration was kept up, His Highness smiling and saluting to right and left. When a point finally was reached where he could make himself heard, he leaned forward and said :

"Does it pay to do the best one can for one's people? For myself I ask no better answer than we have just been given."

The Maharaja is rapidly turning his capital into a model city. Bikaner now has one of the largest and best electric-light installations in India, being among the first of the Indian cities to adopt this mode of lighting. The telephone, too, has been brought into use to connect all the important government offices and residences. Sanitation is a hobby of His Highness, and the entire city has been cleansed, buildings being torn down and replaced where necessary. The streets have

been widened in many places, and just now a modern water-supply system is being installed.

The Maharaja has a keen sense of appreciation of the beautiful, and has erected a large number of magnificent buildings, of Oriental design but with Western interiors, most of which are for the use of the public or the Government. The plans for all these structures have been personally supervised by His Highness, who is said to have great architectural ability.

The Ruler no longer lives in the ancient, fort-encircled palace of his ancestors, but has built a palace further away from the city—a fairyland with its beautiful gardens. And at the same time, while placing himself in more modern surroundings, he laid out a great public garden for his people opposite the old palace. Even a zoo has been placed in this park for the amusement of the little folk of Bikaner, and facilities for bathing are provided in a large artificial lake.

His Highness is particularly interested in the education of his subjects, and while he has not yet inaugurated compulsory education, he has by persuasion worked wonders in getting the people to send their children to school. In the capital two colleges have been built, one for the public and the other for the sons of nobles. The public college has something like 1,000 pupils, who are being taught both in English and

their own language. The nobles' college, while smaller, has a large number of students.

The State prison in Bikaner was characterised recently by a distinguished foreign nobleman, who had travelled extensively, as the best-managed prison he had seen in any country. The institution certainly appears more like a well-regulated factory than a place of confinement. Cleanliness is a great feature, the whole place being kept so spotless that it fairly glistens. And in this prison the men are being instructed in useful arts which will be of value to them when they are released. Carpet-making is the principal industry taught, and so beautiful in design and well made are the carpets that orders from many countries are constantly pouring in. The Maharaja's palace is equipped throughout with exquisite rugs made in the prison.

Outside the capital the Maharaja has also been at work, and has increased the mileage of railways in his state from 86 to 498 miles. Two new lines are in project—one 132 miles long, and the other a more direct connection between Delhi and Sind via Bikaner, some 500 miles in length. A great irrigation plan, which will turn the sandy country of Bikaner into good agricultural lands, is also under consideration.

For his achievements, the Maharaja has been decorated by the King several times, being a Knight Grand Commander of the Most Exalted

Order of the Star of India and Knight Grand Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire—the two highest Indian Orders. He is also the possessor of the gold Kaisar-i-Hind Medal, instituted for rewarding public service, which His Highness won for the part he played in the greatest famine on record—that of 1899-1900. Cambridge University, too, has conferred upon him the honorary degree of LL.D.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DAWN OF A NEW LITERATURE

THE awakening of India to a desire for progress has touched not only material matters, but has reached into the realms of literature.

It was my privilege while in India to become acquainted with Sardar Jogendra Singh, the eminent Indian novelist, philosopher and poet, and to have many conversations with him concerning the future of Indian letters. The Sardar, a keen student of Western methods and ideals, and a member of the modern school of Indian literary men and women who have, to a large extent, adopted the English language as the vehicle for their thoughts, declared that he could see the dawn of a new literature breaking over his country. The influence that was ushering in this era, he said, was emanating not from the East, but from the West.

The Sardar devotes most of his time to writing or to studying the problems of life. Eight months of the year he spends travelling about the Punjab, partly for the purpose of supervising his estates,

but principally to add to his knowledge of humanity, for on these trips he lives a great deal among the labouring people. During the summer he is in Simla, India's hot-weather capital, and it was here that I first met him. His Simla home is built high on the side of one of the myriad mountains of this region, overlooking ravine-like valleys and a confusion of vast, multi-coloured hills, which are typical to the Himalayas. Here he dreams and writes, utilising the information that he has gathered through the season past.

When I finally asked the Sardar to express for publication his views on Indian literature and its future, I requested him to do so in the form of a written statement. This he consented to, and prepared an article which not only presents his beliefs, but shows something of the new style of writing developed in the East. Here is what the Sardar wrote :

“ You have asked me a difficult question. The growth of literature is the growth of a nation : its painted story, set in relief by high and low lights of imagination. After long ages India is awakening from a heavy slumber, seeking freedom from vapoury dreams. It is not from the East this time, but from the West that the light has come and touched the eyelids of the sleeper. It has awakened once more national emotions and a passion for high matters of human progress.

With the awakening has come the dawn of a new literature.

"The days that are gone were bankrupt of any inspiring conceptions of human progress, and drearily commonplace. The spiritual realm beyond the bounds of phenomena was only real to the elect, and vaguely indefinite to the many. Life was not to be lived as a joy for ever, but to be regarded as a delusion. What we saw and heard with our eyes and ears was unreal, utterly incomplete and useless. To reach the realm of reality the impulse of passion must be crushed. Men burning with high emotions turned their thoughts to the inner world, and all literary effort was confined to the writings of commentaries. The soul of the country found expression in common village songs—soul emotions that in a moment of piercing passion passed the lips and shaped into sweet, sad, swooning refrains, that rise and fall, echo and re-echo, in the silent hills, or the solitary widespread plains :

" ' Khujva Tairi Mairi Hansa di Juri.'
 ' O wanderer, Thou and I
 Make a wondrous pair of swans.'

"India in decadence was not altogether without the consolation of high thoughts." Tulsi Dass, whose tender melodies are on the lips of almost everyone, discovered a new way for the ardent spirits to lose self in the love of God and

gain immortal self. He did not try to reason out faith, or bind the absolute into intellectual conceptions. He opened out fresh fountains of faith, to sweep away all misgivings. He spoke with a sweetness and spirituality at once beautiful and tender, which seems to transmute the finite universe of light and shadows into endless reality.

"The Mohammedan period had its days of glory. Men like Abul Fazal and Faizi explored the regions of thought, untiring in their search after animating ideals of life. Poets like Ghalib scaled new realms of thought and emotion; and their passionate impression found expression in wondrous verse. But those who followed them were essentially imitative. They wrote, as a matter of course, poetry or prose full and solemn in sound, but thin in thought and impression. The literature of this period is opulent in grace and sentiment, but without the strength of passionate experience. It is perfumed and sentimental about love and the rose, spring and the nightingale, but of too delicate a sweetness to last. It mirrors the decadence of the race.

"Then came the change. India passed under the British Crown and unconsciously became a partner in her garnered wealth of wisdom and aspiration. Macaulay placed the golden key to the 'King's Treasuries' in the hands of Britannia's dark-eyed sister. The intellectual excitement

in and about the universities gave birth to a great movement for social good. New aspirations and serious thinking stirred the towns and travelled down to the villages. Men could no longer complain that there was no national passion in the country. The new thought currents 'racing full blast' disturbed subjective musings and dissipated consolation in the thought that the world was a mere representation of self —an appearance of the 'thing in itself,' unreal in the essence, and therefore to be disregarded. They set the heart aflame with deep religious, social, and political questions. They have brought into play passion and fire and deep emotion which must give rise to a great literature.

"It is always fascinating to stand at the birth-place of a great stream, as it flows from its source. The new literary movement, in almost all the provinces of India, is mostly imitative. English ideals predominate. What we write is Western and not Eastern. The events are the same, but the environment has changed. The characters are developed in the modern fashion, and even style and expression are subordinated to approximate Western models.

"In old provinces like Bengal or Bombay, the people have turned from rivers of English literature to freshly-found fountains of their own. Great poets like Tagore have brought to life an impassioned literature, retaining the

loveliness, simplicity, and fine melody of the old, but animated by a new and positive influence. Tagore's songs are like fire-tipped arrows dipped in honey, sweet and strong at the same time.

"In Northern India, which is the land of Guru Nanak and Kabir, the literature was essentially religious. The poets were hymn writers, who raised their voices in gentle devotion, seeking communion with God, in obedience to a set of large religious ideas which have emancipated the minds of men from the tentacles of Pantheism. Faith in a personal God restored the dignity and the importance of the personal soul. Bir Singh, the first Punjabi writer of our time, has all the delicate feeling and tender grace of cloistered contemplation. He has a gracious love of natural beauty and a keen joy in a quiet and a lovely world. His imagination, however, does not soar; he seems to have set for himself limits which he cannot and will not transcend. Men and women in the villages are beyond his reach. They have their stories and their songs, passing from lip to lip and drawing together all the passion of the soul as contributaries with all their light and heat and variety.

"The mental invasion of the East is more potent than the physical conquest. The new ideas are dominating every sphere of human activity, working in a quiet way and changing

158 THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

the manner and form of our literature. The spirit from within is moving, in response to new demands.

“A great poet has risen in the Punjab whose poems are consecrated to the ideas of new time. Iqbal has initiated a new era in Urdu poetry. He combines the imaginative philosophy of the East with ardent aspirations of the West. Like Moses he smote the rock, and fresh streams o poetry have leapt out in response, on whose swift and translucent surface we can hardly breathe. He does not sing of self-effacement, but holds forth self-affirmation as essential to self-preservation.

“The life value of self-affirmation he illustrates in a poem of great dignity and grace, ‘A thirsty bird might mistake a diamond for a drop o’ water, but it cannot make it a source of life to itself. It sips the soft morning dew from the painted petals of flowers which lose their own brief existence in the yielding. The coal in essence is the same as a diamond, and yet coal feeds the flaming furnace while the diamond adorns the crown.’ In a poem of keen, strong, rousing power he draws the moral that self-affirmation is the key to self-preservation.

“Iqbal in this poem has broken away entirely from the canons of accepted opinion. He is the precursor of great events in the domain of literature. He is the poet of reality, close to

the very truth of things, in contradistinction to metaphysics and mere sentiment.

"His force, anger, even his gloom and freedom from mystic reticence, make him a spirit of power. His ambition is to set the heart burning like a candle, to be consumed and yet in the very process of burning to illuminate the path for the unseeing eye.

"He plunges into the whirlpool of thoughts, hopes and passions, joys and sorrows, and brings forth into life, with unshackled freedom, truth, and favour, ideas, silent so long, of religious, social, and political well-being. Iqbal, Tagore, and others are precursors of a new movement. What will India make of it? What will the new movement make of the new literature? It is not for me to prophesy. The words of Iqbal ring clear :

" 'The world will witness when from my heart
springs the storm of expression ;
My silence conceals
the seed of aspiration.' "

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY HAZELL, WATSON AND VINEY, LTD.,
LONDON AND AYLESBURY.

